アニメ ANIME UK

MAGAZINE

1

WINTER 91-92

MACROSS SHOCK!

ANIME START-UP

YAMATO KITS

CANDY ANIME

TARGET LOCK-ON

PATLABOR

ANIME UK MAGAZINE

VOL.1 NO.1
WINTER 91/92

EDITOR
Helen McCarthy
Founder editor and publisher of ANIME UK NEWSLETTER (and British fandoms first organizer), Helen is a graduate of the Genghis Khan School of Management whose role models are Arale and C-Ko. ANIME UK is only the start - her ultimate aim is to infiltrate anime into the whole of Western culture, right down to our hairstyles...

ART and DESIGN
Wil Overton
Graphic Design professional and workaholic in the Miyazaki mould (is this really me?-Wil), Wil is already aiding and abetting his Editor's infiltration plan by enlisting British womanhood, his mum and girlfriend are now anime fans. In this fearsome task he is assisted by:

STAFF ARTIST
Steve Kyte
Freelance illustrator whose current favourite line is "Excuse me, miss, I have to draw this anime shower scene - could you model for me?"
Steve was Britain's first-ever anime artist, producing art and covers for the one-shot fanzine ROBOTECH UK in 1987, and since then for MEKTEK and ANIME UK NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHER
Peter Goll
Sigma Colour Ltd.
Boundless courage, unlimited vision and unquenchable optimisim are just some of Peter's characteristics - and may he never sober up! This is his first brush with anime and so far he thinks he's enjoying it.

Special thanks this issue go to:

Sue Shadbolt, for photographic assistance and Totoro cakes.
The two Bob's from Infinite Images, for help on the sweet pic.
Barry, for not flushing the computer memory.

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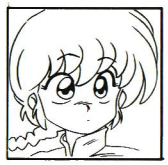

HAJIMIMASHITE!

That's the the greeting the Japanese use the first time they meet someone - a sort of "pleased to meet you". **ANIME UK MAGAZINE** is pleased to meet you, and we hope this will be the start of a long acquaintance.

Anime (ah-nee-may) is the Japanese "loan-word" (a word borrowed from another language) for animation. In the West it's used to distinguish the Japanese product from our own animation - if it's animated in Japan, it's anime.

The growth of anime fandom in Britain and the phenomenal success of Otomo's modern classic AKIRA on sell-through release has led to a spread of interest in the genre. **ANIME UK NEWSLETTER** was launched in June 1990 to provide information and a contact point for British fandom, and **ANIME UK MAGAZINE** is a further development of these aims. While the newsletter continues to provide fan-related information, short articles and contacts, the magazine can look in more depth at both popular shows and more esoteric items.

ANIME UK MAGAZINE has been set up as a joint venture by Helen McCarthy, founder and editor of the newsletter, and Sigma Advertising Services Ltd. Helen's longstanding ambition to launch a British anime zine has been fufilled with the help of Art Editor Wil Overton of Sigma and staff artist/writer Steve Kyte, and of writers such as Peter J. Evans and Jim Swallow, already known for their fan contributions.

This first issue is something of an experiment - we know what sort of magazine we want to produce, but we need your opinions, comments, requests, feedback of all kinds, to make sure it's also a magazine you'll want to read! All letters to the editor will be read, considered and valued; the best will appear in the lettercolumn (starting next issue) which we hope will be a lively and interesting forum for all anime fans.

We also need your support. In an ideal world it wouldn't matter how many copies we sold as long as we produced a good magazine, but in this far from ideal world we need to make sales. Tell your friends about **ANIME UK MAGAZINE**; if you belong to an sf/fantasy club or group, tell them about it too; if your local sf/fantasy shop doesn't stock it, show them this copy and ask them to order a few. If we can sell enough copies we'll carry on publishing. Issue 2 will be out at the end of March 1992, and with your support we plan to publish quarterly thereafter.

Once again, we're pleased to meet you - and we hope you'll become a regular reader.

Front Cover: Noa Izumi and Alphonse by Wil Overton

Back Cover: M66-F6 (from BLACK MAGIC (MARIO) M66 by Masamune Shirow) by Steve Kyte

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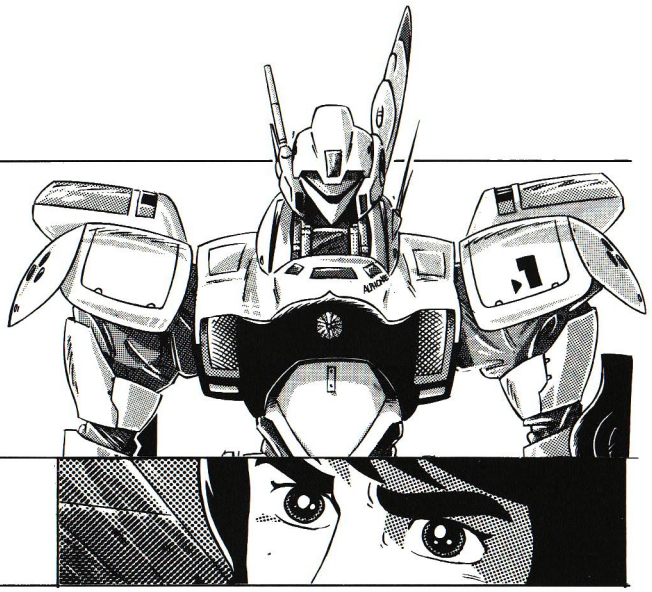
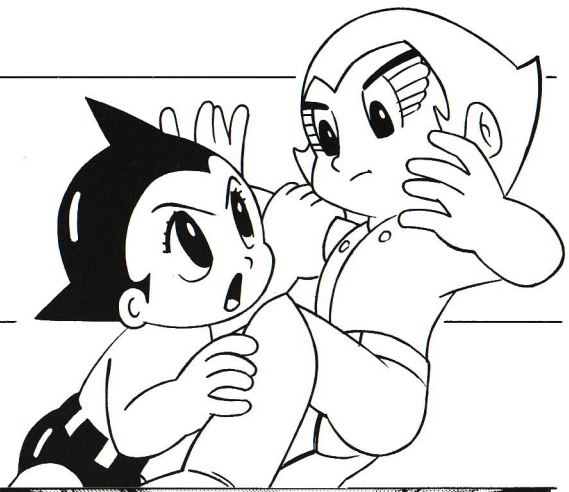
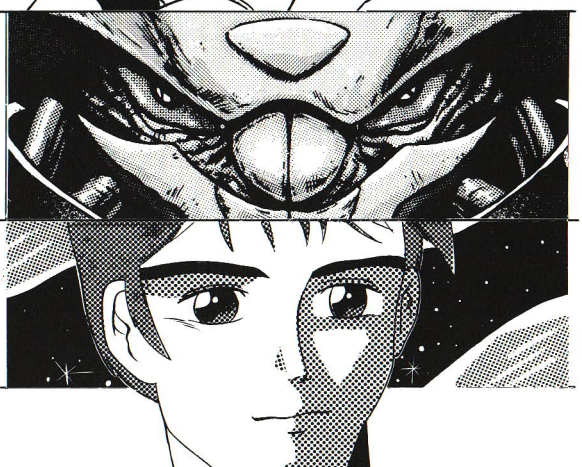
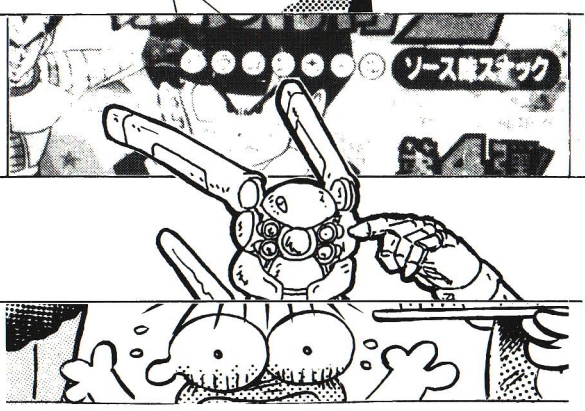








MACROSS SHOCK AGAIN!

SPRING 92: SUPER DIMENSIONAL MACROSS

Our man in Hawaii, **WAYNE VINCENT,** sent us a report from the pages of ANIMAGE 11 (out Nov 91) on this upcoming feature, which none of the other anime magazines seem to have got wind of yet. ANIMAGE made it their cover story and ran a feature with chara and mech designs - a major scoop for the longrunning magazine and great news for the legions of MACROSS/ROBOTECH fans worldwide.

The story is set about 300 years after SDF MACROSS. Since then, Earth and the Zentraedi have been co-existing peaceably, and the enemy is a race of beings called the **MALDOKES**. Their weapons are Zentraedi-ish so there may be a cultural or racial link between the two.

The main characters are:

ISHTAR

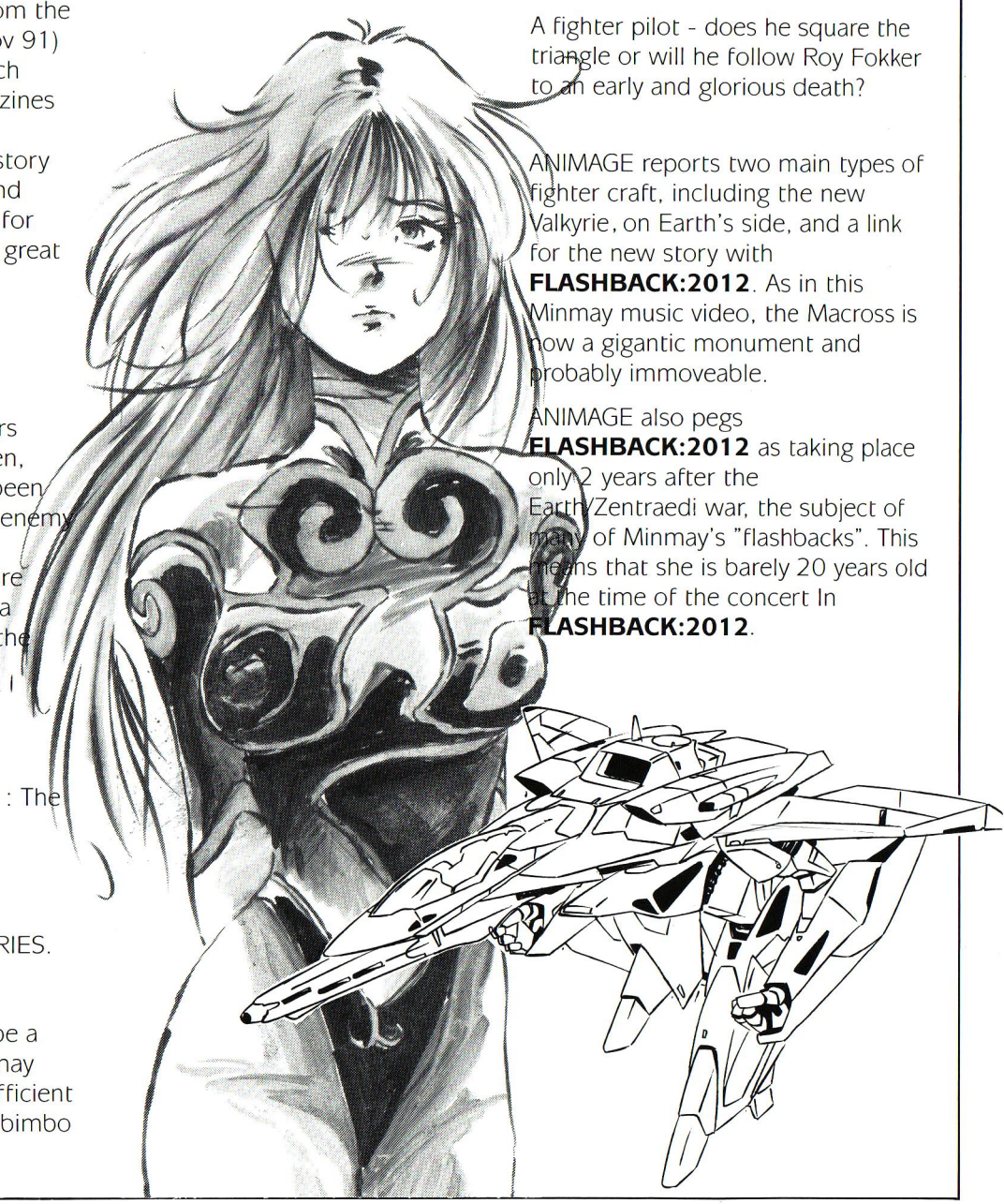
(on the cover of ANIMAGE 11) : The female lead, in the traditional 'Idol/Heroine' mould.

HIBIKI

Pilot of one of the new VALKYRIES.

SYLVIE

A female fighter ace. Will this be a re-run of the Misa/Hikaru/Minmay love triangle, with the clever, efficient liberated woman and the cute bimbo fighting over the hero?



NEXXUS

A fighter pilot - does he square the triangle or will he follow Roy Fokker to an early and glorious death?

ANIMAGE reports two main types of fighter craft, including the new Valkyrie, on Earth's side, and a link for the new story with **FLASHBACK:2012**. As in this Minmay music video, the Macross is now a gigantic monument and probably immoveable.

ANIMAGE also pegs **FLASHBACK:2012** as taking place only 2 years after the Earth/Zentraedi war, the subject of many of Minmay's "flashbacks". This means that she is barely 20 years old at the time of the concert In **FLASHBACK:2012**.

NEWSLINE

AKIRA ON TV !

ISLAND WORLD COMMUNICATIONS have sold AKIRA to the BBC, but no date has yet been set for its British TV premiere.

LAURENCE GUINNESS of Island World Communications adds that IWC welcome all comments, ideas and suggestions from anime fans. As they plan a small but steady programme of new releases, with a total of 3-4 new titles a month across their whole catalogue, new anime titles may appear only every couple of months, but they are keen to gather as much information as possible on what fans want and how it should be presented.

Write to: **Island World Communications** at: 40 St Peter's Road, London W6 9BD, marking the envelope for the attention of Laurence Guinness.

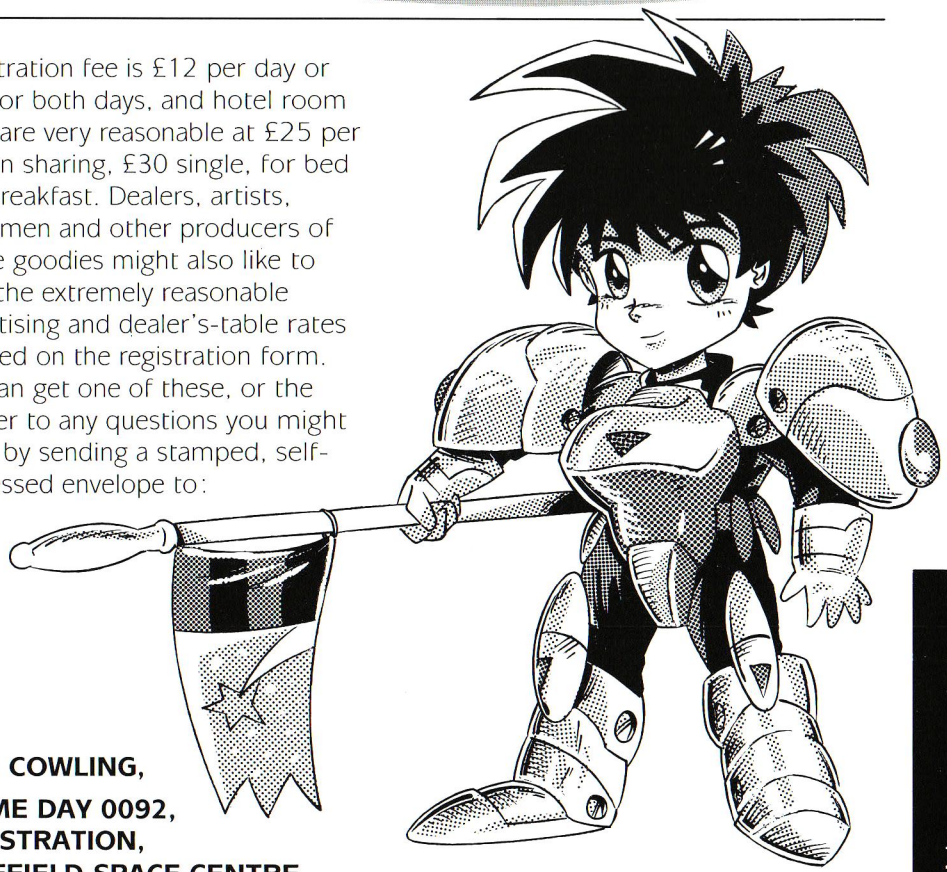
As we go to press, the answer on whether any more titles from the Streamline Pictures catalogue have been purchased by IWP is still "no comment".

ANIME DAY 0092: CON IN THE POCKET

is the name given by chairman **DARREN "ROBODAZ" ASHMORE** and his team to the successor to last year's **ANIME DAY**. Britain's first-ever anime con was such a success that sponsors **SHEFFIELD SPACE CENTRE** and the committee are going for broke with a weekend event on March 7 & 8, 1992, in Sheffield's Rutland Hotel.

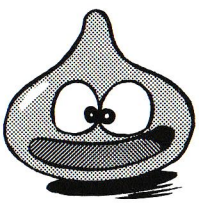
The weekend format will (of course) allow the team to show more anime, but will also give wider scope for other events - for example a bigger art show or more games and competitions. Robodaz and the team want to know what you'd like to see at the con, and are also open to any offers of help with convention work beforehand or at the event, so if you have any ideas or suggestions please write to them.

Registration fee is £12 per day or £20 for both days, and hotel room rates are very reasonable at £25 per person sharing, £30 single, for bed and breakfast. Dealers, artists, craftsmen and other producers of anime goodies might also like to note the extremely reasonable advertising and dealer's-table rates detailed on the registration form. You can get one of these, or the answer to any questions you might have, by sending a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:



RICK COWLING,
ANIME DAY 0092,
REGISTRATION,
SHEFFIELD SPACE CENTRE,
33 THE WICKER,
SHEFFIELD S3 8HS

SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL ANIME CON - REGISTER NOW!



ANIME CON 2 If you can afford something a little more exotic than Sheffield next year, you may like to know that the second Anime Con - America's only exclusively-anime event - will take place over the weekend of 4th July in California. ANIME CON 1 was reported extensively in ANIME UK NEWSLETTER in October, and the general view was that it's well worth going to, though the number of irresistible anime goodies on sale makes it hideously expensive for the weak-willed. It was also a great place to make contact with anime fans from around the world. For more details of ANIME CON 2, write to: ANIME CON 2, c/o Mike Tatsugawa, 300 Eschelman Hall, U.C. Berkeley, CA94720, USA, enclosing 2 IRC's for a reply.

DATELINES

If you're planning a trip to Tokyo next year, here are two dates you might like to be aware of.

August 1992:

HIROSHIMA ANIMATION FESTIVAL

Contact:
1-1 NAKAJIMO-CHO,
NAKA-KU, HIROSHIMA, 730 JAPAN
Phone: 01081-82-245-0245
Fax: 01081-82-245-0245

September 1992:

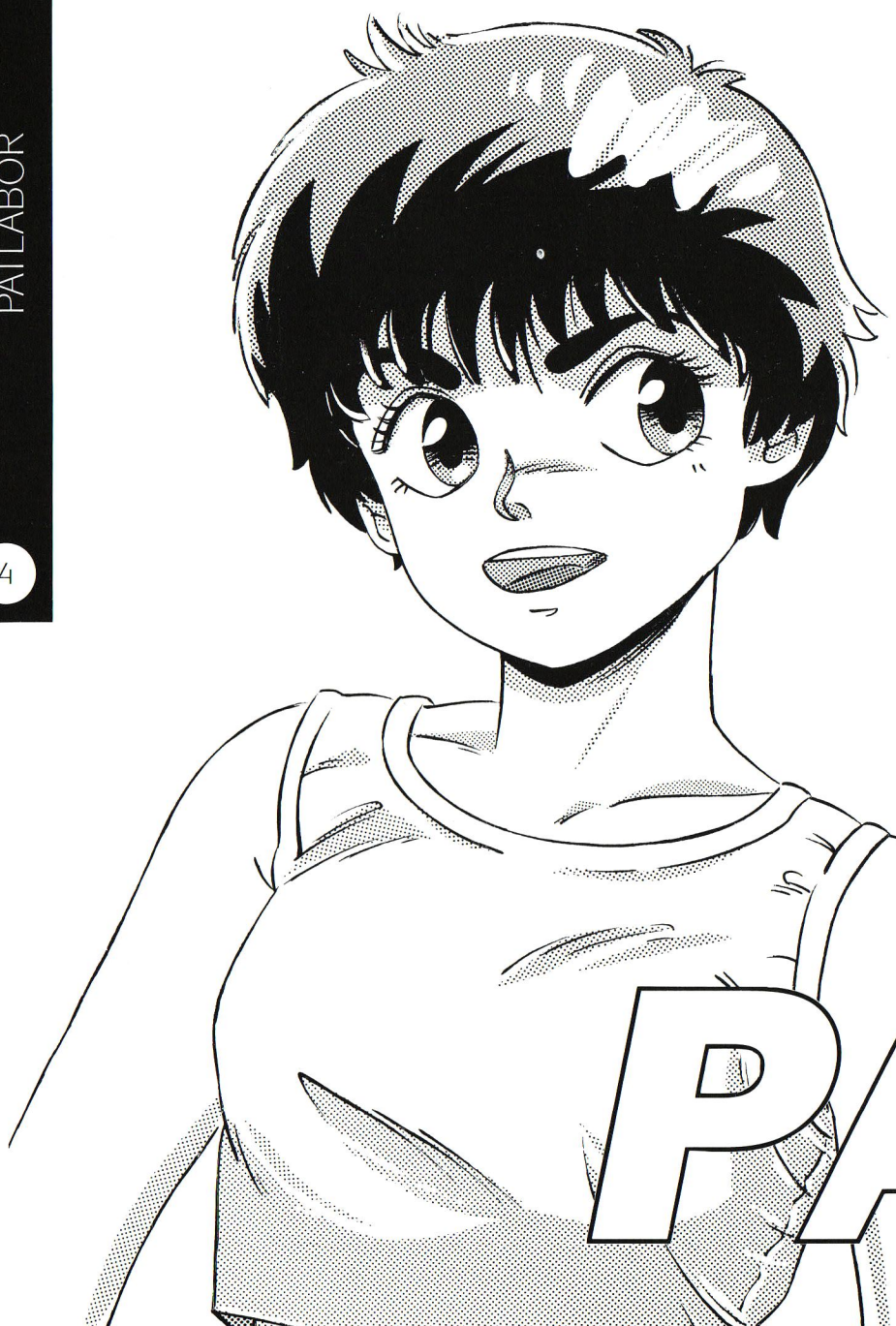
TOKYO INTERNATIONAL ANIMATION FESTIVAL

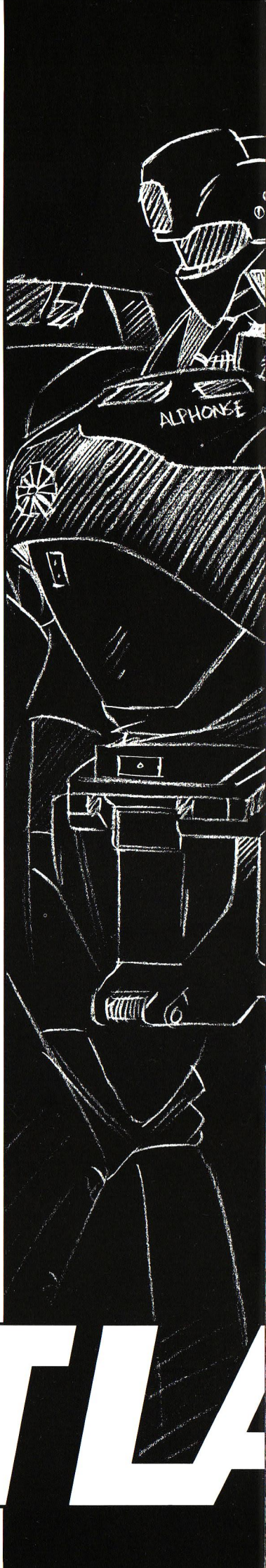
Contact:
ANIDO FILM INTERNATIONAL,
7-17-5-506 GINZA,
CHOU-KU, TOKYO 104, JAPAN
Phone: 01081-3-3543-7735
Fax: 01081-3-3543-7570

Please bear in mind that Japanese time is 9 hours later than GMT, so calls after about 10am UK time are after office hours in Japan, and that not all offices have English-speaking switchboard staff - so a letter/fax may be more effective than a phone call.

What's it like to be pulled over for speeding by a thirty-foot robot wielding a six-foot electrified truncheon, piloted by the cutest little redhead you ever saw? What do you do when a robot runs amok on a building site with a drunk at the controls? All part of a normal day on the streets of Tokyo in 1998.

In the late eighties anime was in something of a slump, declining from its dramatic popularity of five years earlier. It was increasingly difficult for young animators to find sponsors for new tv shows; the mighty BANDAI insisted that a new tv show have great merchandising potential and almost cast iron appeal to a wide audience, and more and more sponsors were taking the same hard line. With sponsorship for the expense of producing a weekly tv show harder and harder to come by, many of the most creative people in the anime industry turned to video,and began producing Original Animation Videos (OAV's, also called OVA's) for sell-through. OAV's need far smaller audience figures to break even and because they don't have to appeal to everyone who might turn on the tv their creators can take more risks and experiment with new techniques and ideas far more readily than if they had a sponsor breathing down their necks in a panic about last week's audience ratings. If an OAV is popular it can easily become a series; if it isn't, no merchandising support has been planned, no airtime has been prebought and no loss of face is involved in dropping it.





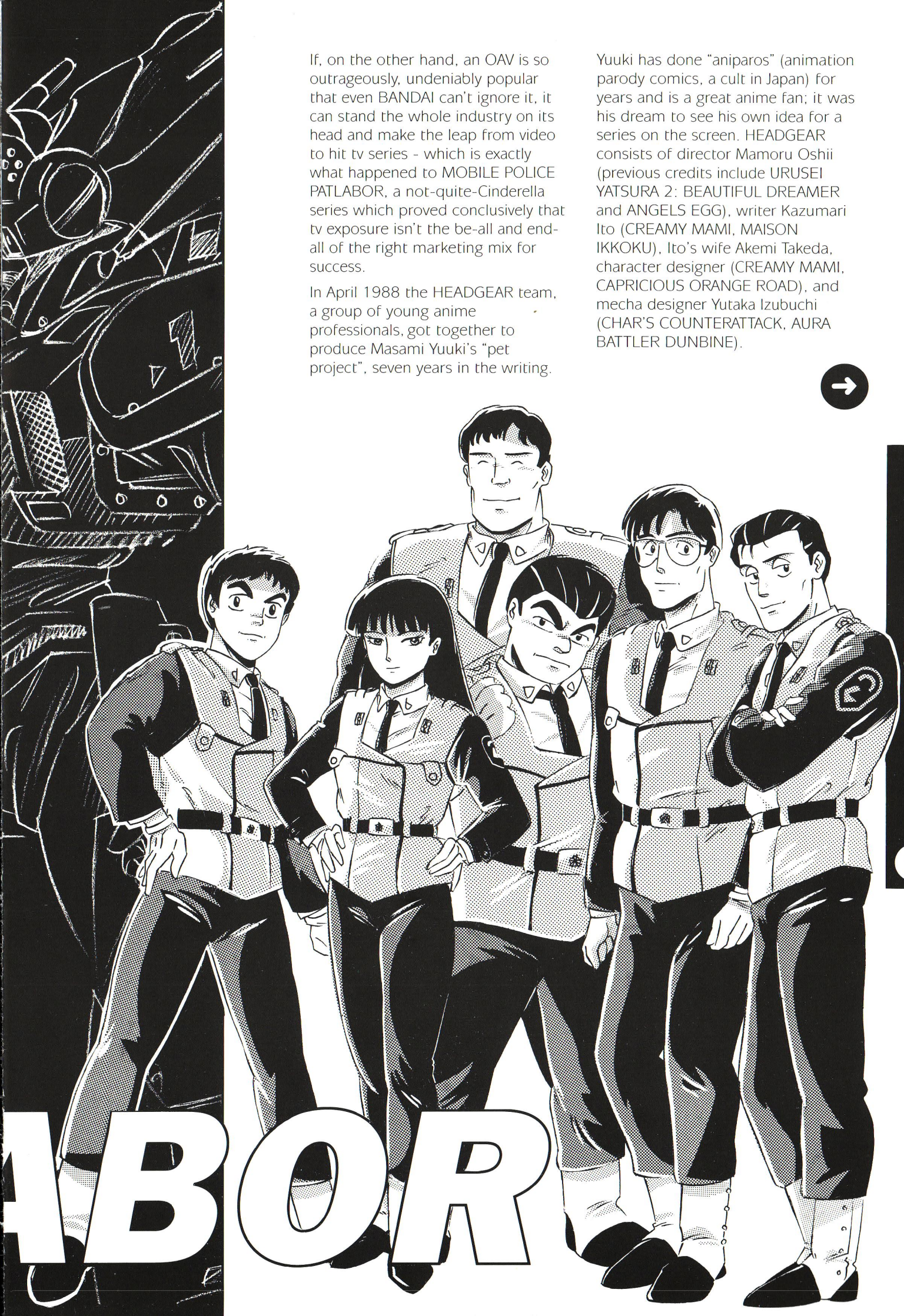
MOBILE POLICE

PATL

If, on the other hand, an OAV is so outrageously, undeniably popular that even BANDAI can't ignore it, it can stand the whole industry on its head and make the leap from video to hit tv series - which is exactly what happened to MOBILE POLICE PATLABOR, a not-quite-Cinderella series which proved conclusively that tv exposure isn't the be-all and end-all of the right marketing mix for success.

In April 1988 the HEADGEAR team, a group of young anime professionals, got together to produce Masami Yuuki's "pet project", seven years in the writing.

Yuuki has done "aniparos" (animation parody comics, a cult in Japan) for years and is a great anime fan; it was his dream to see his own idea for a series on the screen. HEADGEAR consists of director Mamoru Oshii (previous credits include URUSEI YATSURA 2: BEAUTIFUL DREAMER and ANGELS EGG), writer Kazumari Ito (CREAMY MAMI, MAISON IKKOKU), Ito's wife Akemi Takeda, character designer (CREAMY MAMI, CAPRICIOUS ORANGE ROAD), and mecha designer Yutaka Izubuchi (CHAR'S COUNTERATTACK, AURA BATTLER DUNBINE).



Their talent and industry connections meant PATLABOR got a flying start despite its lack of tv backing; from September 1988 the series was heavily promoted in NEWTYPE magazine, which is usually at the cutting edge of anime trends. The manga, which started in April 1988 in SHONEN SUNDAY, was already popular and the first collected volume sold 300,000 copies; their first OAV sold 50,000 units within a very short time of release. With this kind of promotion and backing, and the enormous attraction of its cast and storyline, it wasn't long before PATLABOR made it onto film as PATLABOR THE MOVIE, and finally, having made BANDAI sit up and take notice, onto network tv as PATLABOR ON TELEVISION with the giant toy company's sponsorship.

If PATLABOR had been big before, its success rapidly assumed epic proportions. A small company, Kaijodo, had begun to produce models from the series; BANDAI took up and expanded their range for mass production. They added in other merchandise right across the spectrum - posters, stationery, handkerchiefs, wall hangings, lunch boxes, in fact just about anything that could carry the PATLABOR image. Their B-CLUB shops in Tokyo were receiving new PATLABOR merchandise lines every week for most of 1989 and 1990, and even in the spring of 1991, with the show finally dislodged from its slot as most popular anime on tv by CHIBI MARIKO-CHAN, a British visitor to Toyko in search of anime merchandise commented that "you can get pretty sick of Noa bloody Izumi!!"

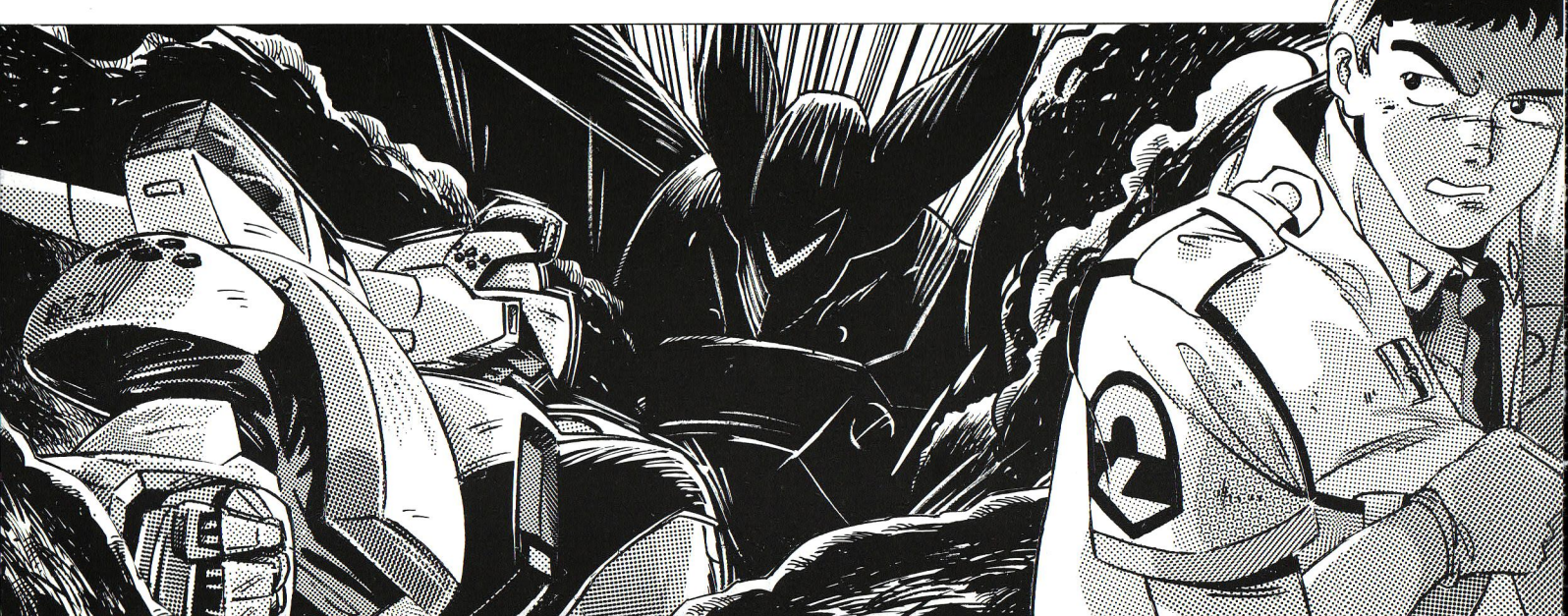
Why was the show so successful? To begin with, it draws on the huge popularity of the "team shows" in Japan. Its individual characters are attractive and distinctive enough to appeal to today's less conformist young Japanese but rely on their colleagues for support and success. It also echoes the American cop shows so fashionable on tv in the eighties, and what's fashionable in America is usually taken up by Japanese youth. Most importantly, it has plenty of humour, from the inherent wry laughter familiar to aficionados of the copshow genre to the sheer slapstick - there's a wonderful episode of the tv series in which an albino alligator is prowling the sewers of Tokyo, giving rise to a couple of chase sequences which are pure Keystone Kops.

The other major factor in its popularity is Japan's technophilia. Set in Tokyo in 1998 and taking technology which is known to be possible as its background, PATLABOR creates a convincing picture of what life could be like in the city in just under a decade. It's also a reassuring picture. Criminal elements are making use of the advances in technology outlined so credibly in the series, and there are problems such as immigration, gangsters, and overcrowding, but the police and authorities are more or less keeping up; Tokyo is still set in beautiful countryside, Tokyo Bay is blue and sparkling, girls are still pretty and people still pleasant to each other. It's the reverse of AKIRA's urban-decay scenario; technology is bringing long-term benefits as well as problems. In its upbeat, positive viewpoint and welcoming attitude to technology the series is strikingly reminiscent of Gerry Anderson's THUNDERBIRDS, which convinced a whole generation of sixties children that the future was going to be F.A.B.

THE SCENARIO

In the early 1990's the greenhouse effect began to cause a serious rise in sea level, the effects of which were felt all over the world, but especially in costal cities, where the threat of flooding meant high risk to the population, and also to the infrastructure of trade, industry and business which depends on such cities. Tokyo's position in a low-lying bay made it one of the most vulnerable cities , and taking their cue from San Francisco's solution the Tokyo city planners began a radical attempt to solve the problem - the BABYLON PROJECT. A system of dams and embankments would hold back the steadily rising waters, cutting off Tokyo Bay from the ocean once cut off, the land could be drained, infilled and built on, relieving congestion in metropolitan Tokyo with its rapidly expanding population.

The huge scale of the project meant that a new approach to construction technology was required. Engineering firms developed huge exoskeletons called LABORs. (Interestingly, the word "robot", which so many people connect with Japanese animation was coined by the Czech playwright Karel Kapek in his play RUR from the Czech word for worker or labourer - so to call a robot LABOR isn't at all inappropriate!)
These huge machines

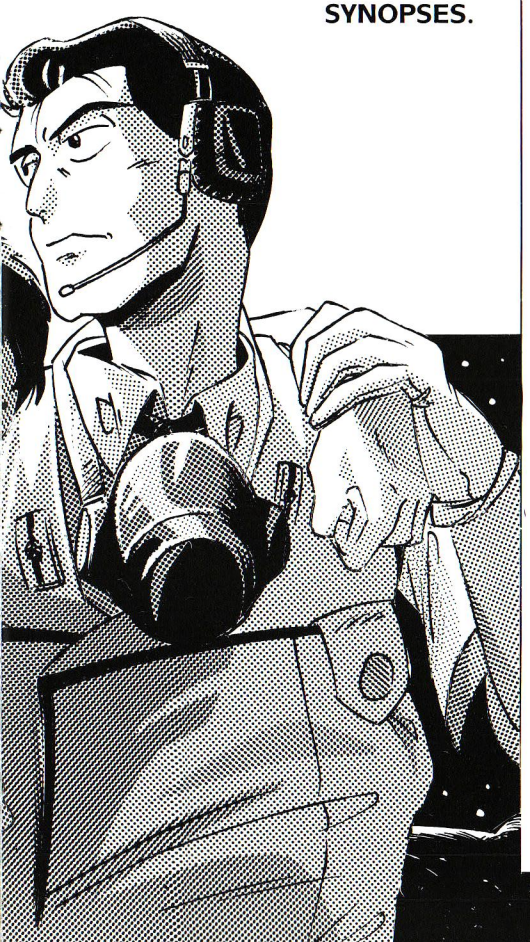


could carry loads of several tonnes and perform a variety of tasks, but they were essentially no more difficult to operate than a truck, thus needing no expensive, highly skilled workers or hours of special training. Their simplicity soon dispelled any mystique a workforce of giant robots might have had, and they became as commonplace in Tokyo and other major cities as trucks and cranes.

However, as labor became more widely used they presented new problems. A drunk or disaffected worker in a labor could cause millions of yen worth of damage in minutes; criminals and terrorists could steal labor; industrial espionage could become even more of a problem for engineering firms. By 1997 the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department decided to keep peace on the streets with their own labor force, in units known as Patrol Labors - patlabors for short.

The Mobile Police was founded to specialise in labor crimes. MOBILE POLICE PATLABOR, set in 1998, is the story of one of its sections, Second Special Vehicle Division Section 2, based on an artificial island in Tokyo Bay from which they can speed to any part of the city when needed, and where the team can be accommodated when on duty. 完

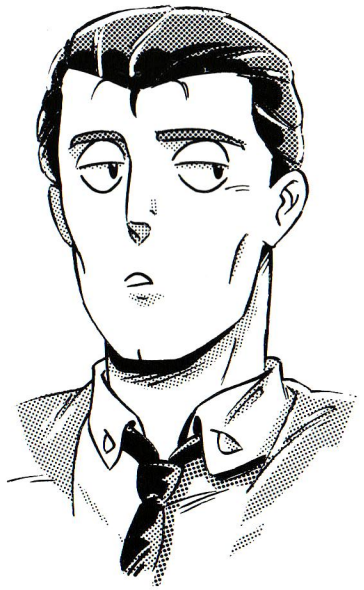
NEXT ISSUE: PATLABOR THE SYNOPSES.

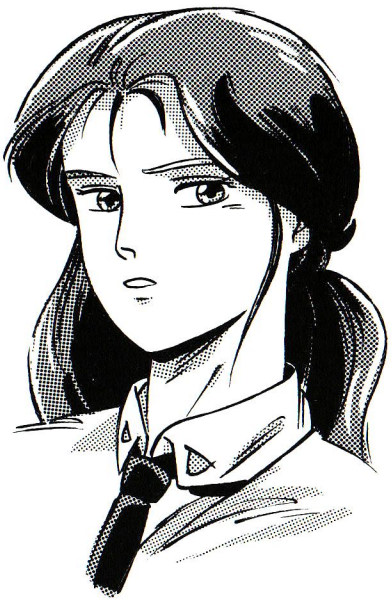


REGULAR CHARACTERS

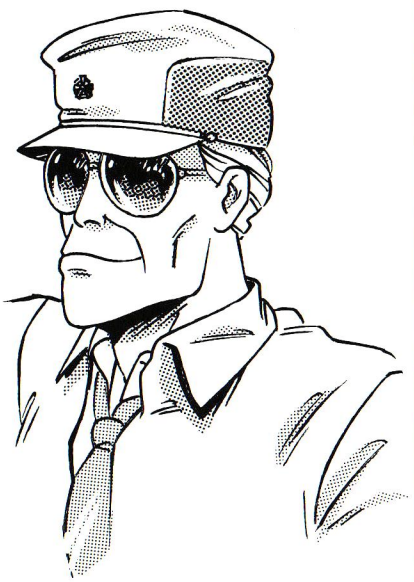
(NB: names are given Western-style, personal name first)

▶CAPTAIN KIICHI GOTO: is the leader of SVD Section 2, a thin, gangling man so laid-back he's almost horizontal. His most usual characteristics are a sleepy expression, eyes permanently half-closed, and a cigarette dangling from his lower lip. Despite his air of total detachment from reality he is a good commander and his staff treat him with affectionate respect. He cherishes warm feelings for his colleague Shinobu Nagumo, but stands no chance with her.

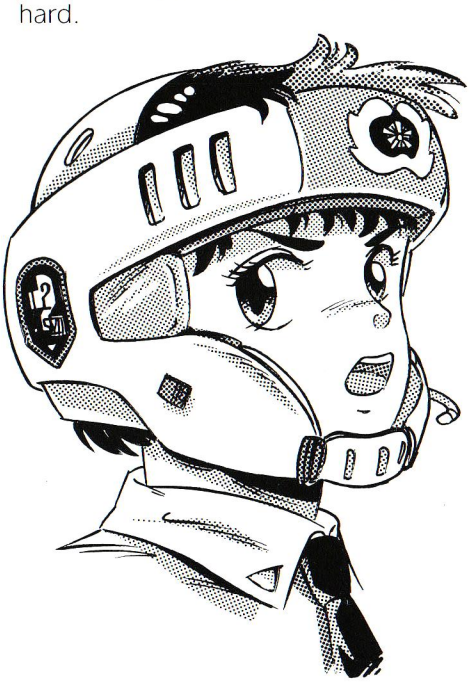




◀CAPTAIN SHINOBU NAGUMO: is Goto's counterpart, leader of SVD section 1, a wellbred, highly-educated young woman and a first class officer. Her calm, unruffled manner and efficiency can make her appear cold but this is just a front.

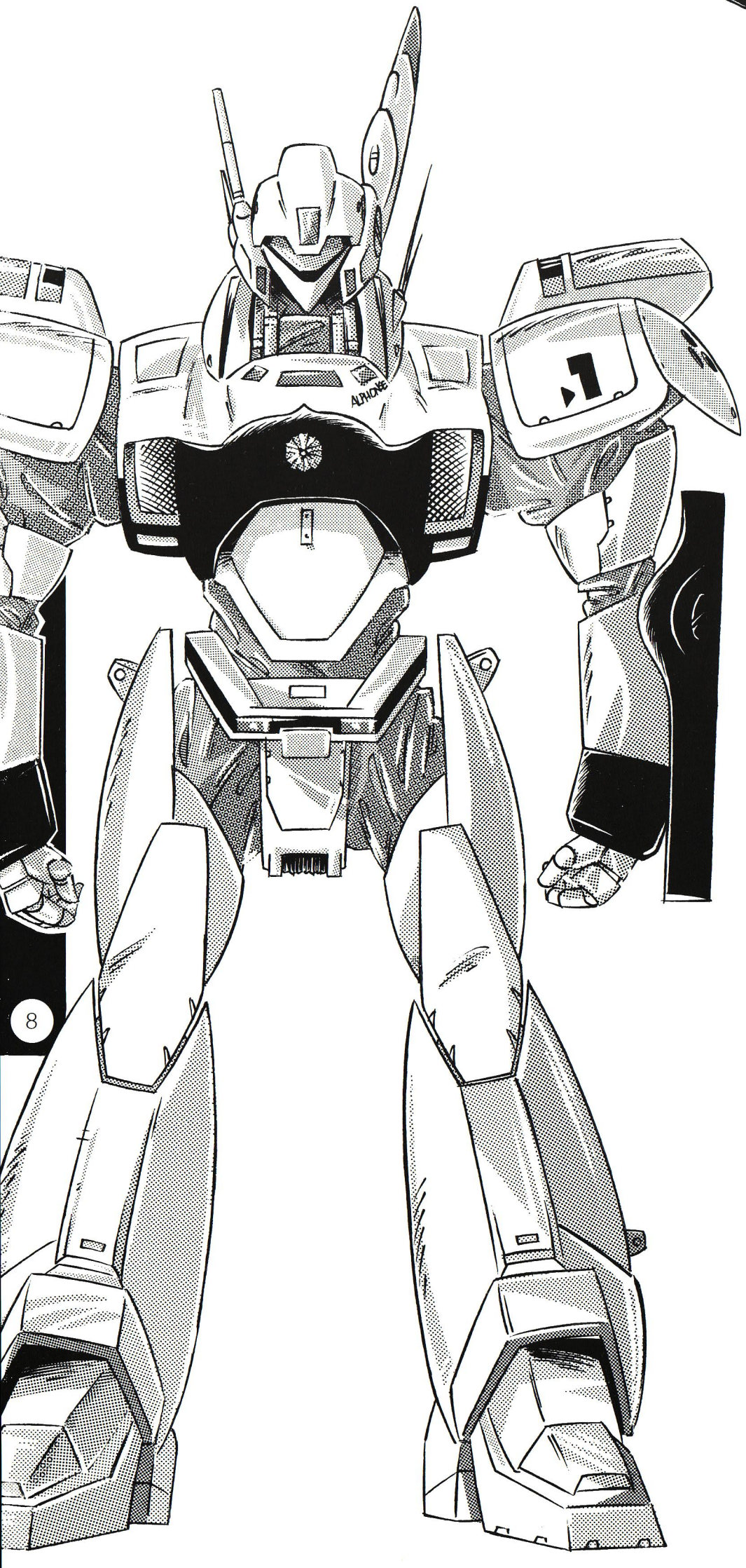


▶SEITARO SAKAKI: veteran engineer of Special Vehicle Division, Sakaki lavishes all his care and affection on his beloved Labors but works the teams who pilot them extremely hard.



◀NOA IZUMI: a youthful redhead who joins SVD2 from the traffic control division, she is pilot, or "forward" in SVD parlance, of an Ingram which she calls after her pet dog Alphonse and to which she is devoted, treating it as almost human. Offduty she lives in Hokkaido with her father, who doesn't approve of a police career for his daughter. Full of energy, enthusiasm and joie de vivre, she also has a stubborn streak a mile wide and a redhead's temper.

P.10 ➜



LAB

Shinohara Heavy Industries of Hachioji, Tokyo, developed Model 98 AV "Ingram" especially for the Special Vehicle divisions of the Mobile Police. A lightweight, high performance labor with excellent manoeuvrability, it is armed with a 37mm revolver (which, shades of ROBOCOP, it stores in a compartment in its right leg) and an electrified "stun-stick".

SPECIFICATIONS:

OFFICIAL CODE: AV-98/INGRAM

USE: AGAINST LABOR CRIME

MANUFACTURE: SHINOHARA IND./HACHIOJI FACTORY

DISPOSITION: APRIL 1998

HEIGHT: 8.02m

WIDTH: 4.37m

DRY WEIGHT: 6.02 tonnes

WORKING WEIGHT: 6.62 tonnes

SURFACE MATERIAL: CFRP/FRM CALUMINIUM STEEL

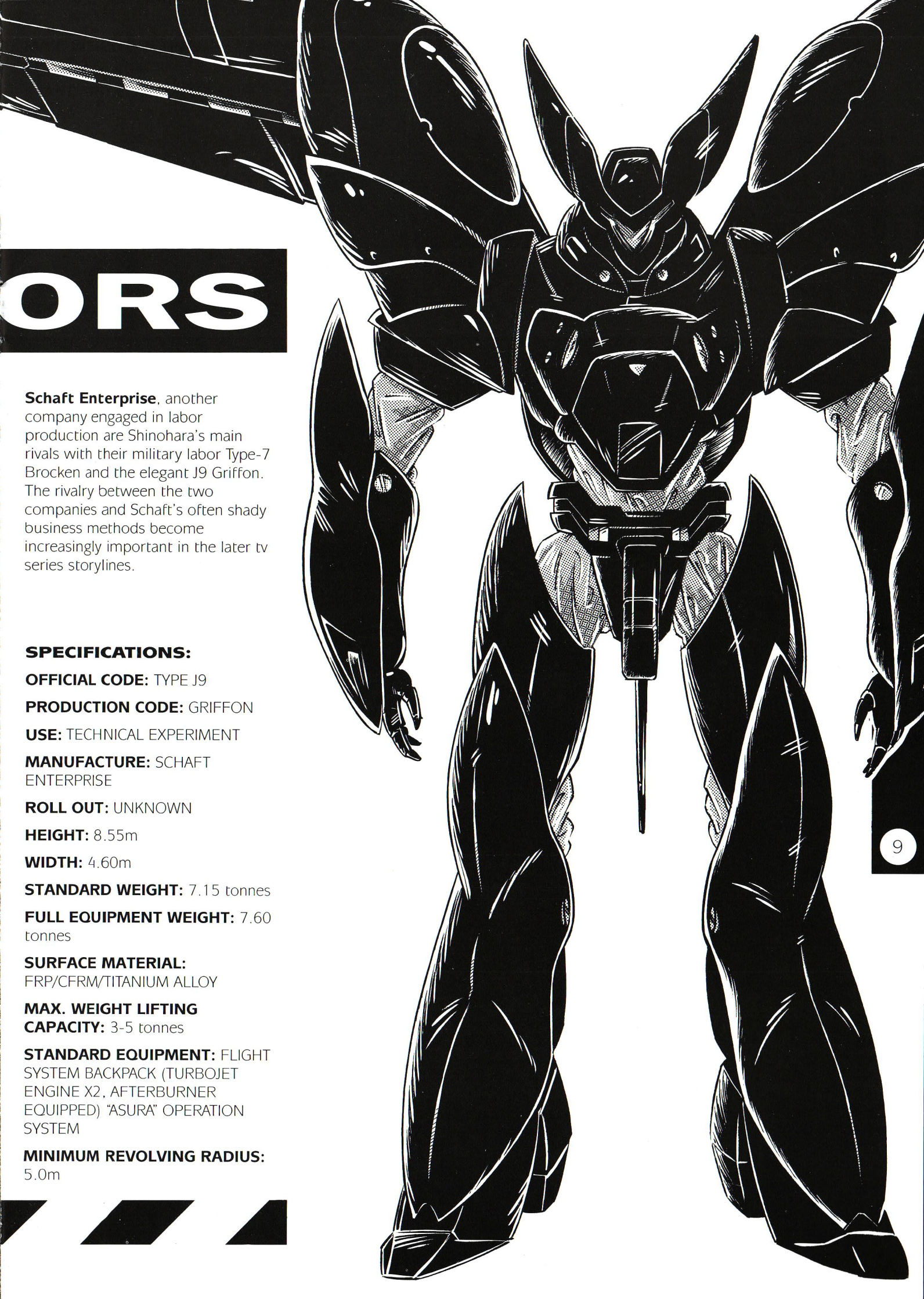
MAX. WEIGHT LIFTING CAPACITY: 2.4 tonnes

STANDARD EQUIPMENT: 37mm REVOLVER CANNON, STUN STICK, RIOT GUN

MIN. REVOLVING RADIUS: 3.9m

Shinohara also produced the older labor used by the SVD Section 1, Model 96 "Asuka", and the Model 97 heavy ground combat labor used by the Japanese Special Defence Force.

ORS



Schaft Enterprise, another company engaged in labor production are Shinohara's main rivals with their military labor Type-7 Brocken and the elegant J9 Griffon. The rivalry between the two companies and Schaft's often shady business methods become increasingly important in the later tv series storylines.

SPECIFICATIONS:

OFFICIAL CODE: TYPE J9

PRODUCTION CODE: GRIFFON

USE: TECHNICAL EXPERIMENT

MANUFACTURE: SCHAFT ENTERPRISE

ROLL OUT: UNKNOWN

HEIGHT: 8.55m

WIDTH: 4.60m

STANDARD WEIGHT: 7.15 tonnes

FULL EQUIPMENT WEIGHT: 7.60 tonnes

SURFACE MATERIAL: FRP/CFRM/TITANIUM ALLOY

MAX. WEIGHT LIFTING CAPACITY: 3-5 tonnes

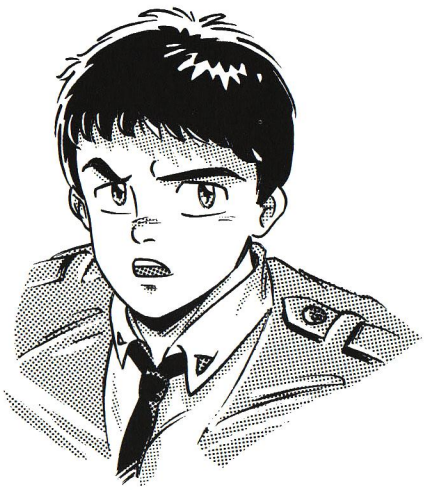
STANDARD EQUIPMENT: FLIGHT SYSTEM BACKPACK (TURBOJET ENGINE X2, AFTERBURNER EQUIPPED) "ASURA" OPERATION SYSTEM

MINIMUM REVOLVING RADIUS: 5.0m

REGULAR CHARACTERS contd.

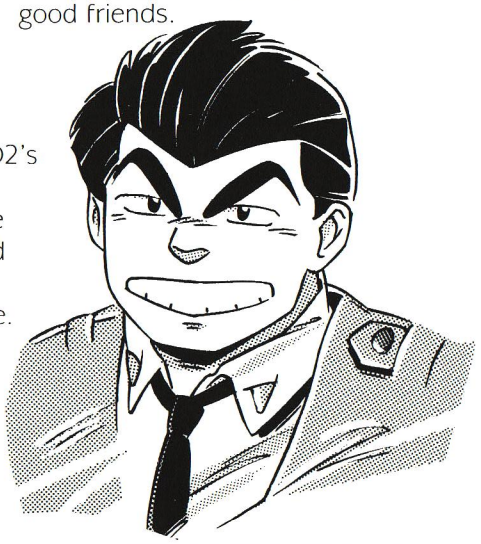
▶SHIGEO SHIBA: "Shige" is an excitable young man with a wildly inventive brain and a passion for new ideas. He spent four months perfecting the riot shotgun for the Ingram. He's also a very talented computer programmer. Slight, scrawny and bespectacled, with a wacky sense of humour.

▶MIKIYASHI SHINSHI: is Ota's backup and the only married member of Section 2, frequently seen "reporting in" to his demanding young wife by telephone. Harried by both his partner and his spouse, Shinshi is a gentle soul who does his best to curb Ota's triggerhappy excesses. Be careful though, he has been known to have psychotic rages!



◀ASUMA SHINOHARA: is Noa's "backup" or field controller on SVD2. Son of the president of Shinohara Engineering, he is tall, dark and attractive, but he and his father don't get on and in fact he is only with SVD2 at all because his father used his influence to have him assigned there out of spite. He is not very fond of police work and distrusts everything connected with the military. He and Noa (whose father also disapproves of her) become good friends.

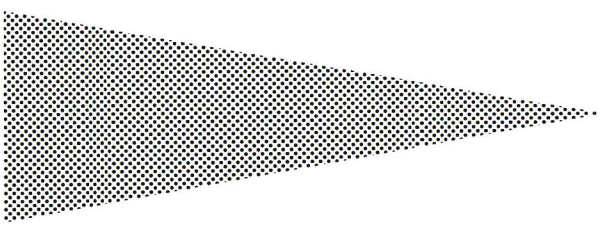
▶ISAO OTA: is the forward of SVD2's second Ingram team. Reckless, triggerhappy, loud and intolerant, he is nevertheless honourable in the old Japanese sense, with a zealous and overwhelming enthusiasm for justice. His favourite weapon is the riot shotgun, which accords with his belief that there's no such thing as overkill.



▶CRANCY KANUKA (NB: most Japanese sources spell the name this way but the R is, of course pronounced as an L) is seconded from New York City Police Department's investigative division to assist the newly formed SVD section. She is third-generation Japanese, born in Hawaii. Aloof and elegant, with a very moneyed background and an excellent education, her slightly superior air does not endear her to her colleagues at first, and she and Noa develop a rivalry which to begin with is far from friendly.

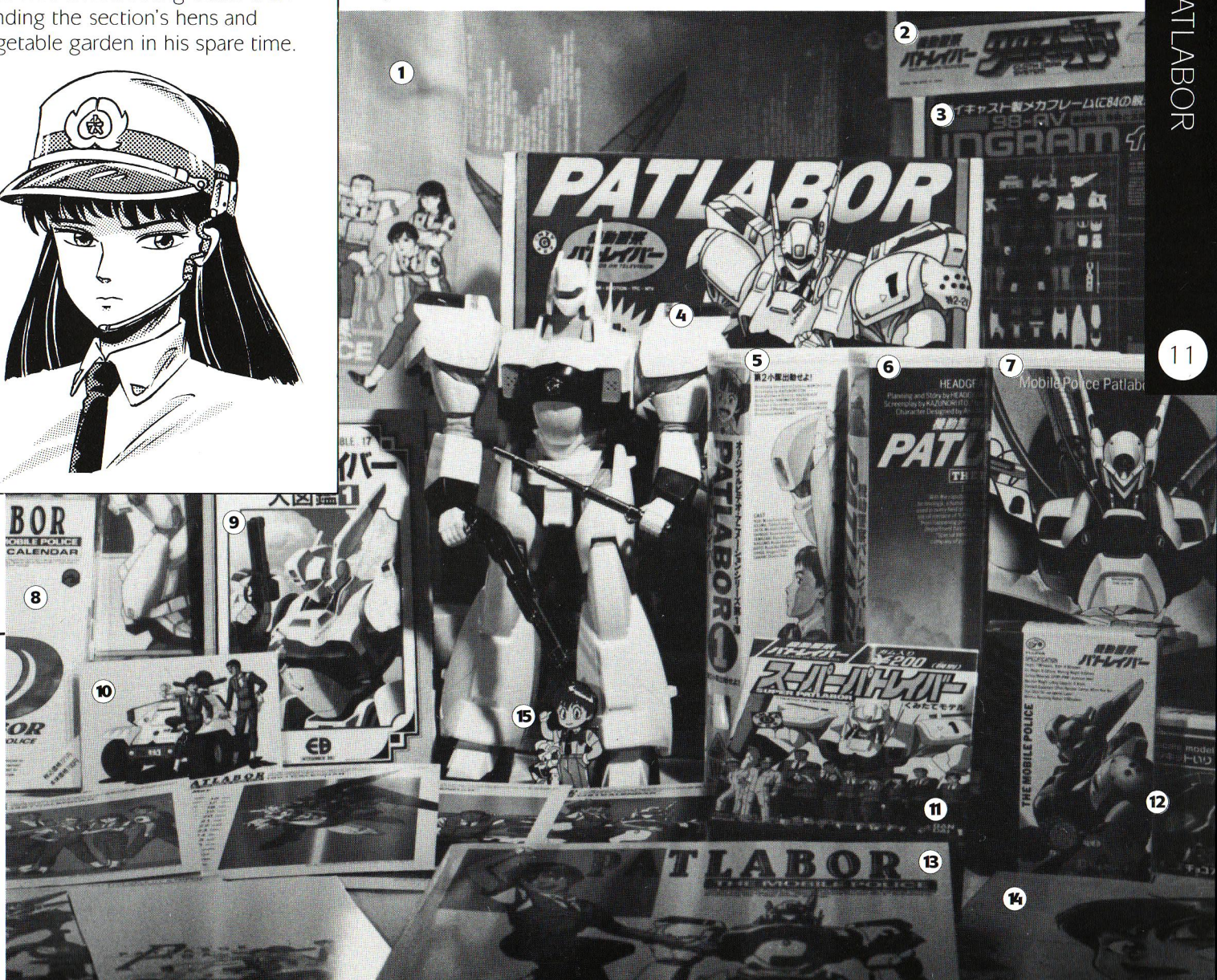
PATLABOR PRESENTS!

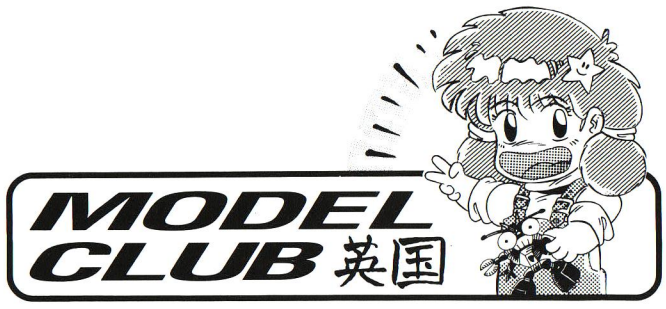
If it's one thing the Japanese know well, it's got to be how to capitalise on a popular anime series through merchandise. Patlabor, being a VERY popular programme seemed to warrant, over the course of its run, more than it's fair share of associated goodies, in fact it seemed, at one point impossible to move without being glared at by either Noa or Alphonse, on everything from posters and notebooks to sweets and scarves! The picture on the right shows only a fraction of what was available but it does give an idea of how much a Japanese Patlabor fan can indulge him or herself in their favourite show.



◀HIROMI YAMAZAKI: the gentle giant of SVD2 is far too big to fit into an Ingram cockpit and therefore relegated to a supporting role, driving either one of the labor transport platforms or a control car. A native of Okinawa, he is a simple soul who likes nothing better than tending the section's hens and vegetable garden in his spare time.

1. PATLABOR COTTON HANDKERCHIEF, 4 COLOUR PRINTING ON WHITE, MAKE UNKNOWN · PRICE 500 YEN.
2. 'CLOTH GEAR SYSTEM'MPL 975 PYTHON LABOR. TOY BY BANDAI. METAL 'SKELETON' FRAME WITH REMOVABLE PLASTIC ARMOUR & ACCESSORIES, 1/60 SCALE · PRICE 2000 YEN.
3. 'CLOTH GEAR SYSTEM' AV-98 INGRAM TOY, DETAILS AS 2.
4. DX PATLABOR AV-98 INGRAM TOY BY BANDAI. PLASTIC ARTICULATED FIGURE WITH ACCESSORIES. VISOR AND SHOULDER UNITS LIGHT UP.. 1/32 SCALE. PRICE 3600 YEN.
5. VIDEO: PATLABOR THE MOBILE POLICE OVA VOL:1. "SECTION 2, TOWARD MARCH!" EMOTION VIDEO, COLOUR 30 MINS · PRICE 4500 YEN.
6. VIDEO: PATLABOR THE MOVIE. EMOTION VIDEO, COLOUR 118 MINS · PRICE 10,000 YEN.
7. VIDEO: PATLABOR VOL: 7½ "AFTER THE MOVIE". EMOTION VIDEO. NOT A SEQUEL, BUT A DOCUMENTARY ON THE MAKING OF THE MOVIE. COLOUR 30 MINS · PRICE 4,500 YEN.
8. PATLABOR CALENDAR 1991 BY KADOKAWA. CD STYLE CASE CONTAINING 12 PICTURE/CALENDAR CARDS (IN FOREGROUND) · PRICE 721 YEN.
9. ENTERTAINMENT BIBLE #17: PATLABOR, PART 1, PUBLISHED BY BANDAI, A SERIES OF POCKET SIZED GUIDEBOOKS TO VARIOUS ANIME AND SPFX PRODUCTIONS. TO DATE THREE VOLUMES HAVE BEEN DEVOTED TO PATLABOR · PRICE 780 YEN.
10. PATLABOR POSTCARD BY SEIKA NOTE CO. LTD · PRICE UNKNOWN.
11. SUPER PATLABOR CANDY BY BANDAI. SNAP TOGETHER MODEL KIT (SCALE NOT GIVEN BUT APPROX 3") PLUS STICK OF BUBBLEGUM. KIT CONTAINS DECAL SHEET. 3 MODELS IN SERIES: AV-98 INGRAM #1, INGRAM #2 AND PYTHON · PRICE 200 YEN.
12. PATLABOR CANDY BY FUJIYA. LOWER BOX CONTAINS CHOCOLATE COVERED BISCUITS. SMALLER TOP BOX CONTAINS 1/180 SCALE SNAP-FIT MODEL KIT. 9 DIFFERENT LABOR KITS IN SERIES · PRICE 100YEN
13. PATLABOR NOTEBOOK BY SEIKA NOTE CO. LTD · PRICE 300 YEN.
14. PATLABOR POSTER – GIVEAWAY WITH 'OUT' MAGAZINE.
15. SD NOA IZUMI/AV-98 ENAMEL BADGE. JAPANESE. MAKE AND PRICE UNKNOWN.





FOREVER YAMATO

The Bandai model kit company of Japan produced over 60 kits based on the Space Cruiser Yamato tv series and films, as well as numerous toys. In 1988 a number of these kits were re-released, though sadly they only represented a fraction of what was originally available.

The Yamato herself was available in a range of sizes, from the largest (1/500 scale - an impressive 525mm in length) to the smallest (no scale given - 125mm), which comes from a range of 30 "mini"-kits of Yamato vessels.

Completing the range were the 1/700 (375mm) model which was also available in a "cutaway" version, the 1/1000 (approx. 9") scale version reviewed by Paul Davidson opposite and the bizarre Yamato "Image Model" at 1/350 scale (380mm) which was moulded in false perspective to imitate the famous angle of the ship coming forwards as so often seen in Yamato books and posters. The result is quite impressive when viewed from the intended angle, but pretty laughable from any other, which made this the least popular of the Yamato kits.

Several of these kits were also released in America in the 80's, to tie-in with the U.S. dubbed version of the series, entitled "STAR BLAZERS". Bandai repackaged the kits on behalf of TCI imports with boxes featuring the Star Blazers logo and with the Yamato renamed the Argo as it was in the dubbed series. However the packaging still carried a line proclaiming that this was really "originally Japan's Space Cruiser Yamato" and the kit's display stand name plates still bore the original Japanese lettering and Yamato logo, which just goes to show, you can't keep a good ship down!

Another little item, treasured by all who own her, is a die-cast toy version of the Yamato produced by the Popy company. 290mm long, it features button operated extended wings and wheels, moveable gun turrets, spring fired missiles, opening bow doors with drop down scanner and concealed launch bays on either side of the hull which spring open and fire mini space craft. Eat yer heart out Dinky toys!

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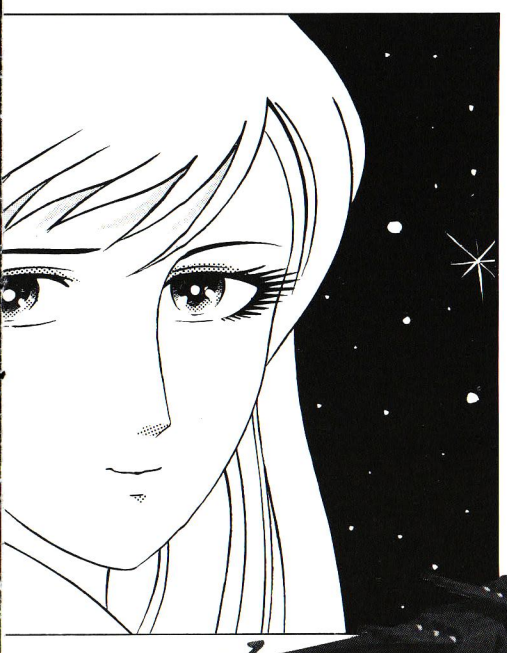
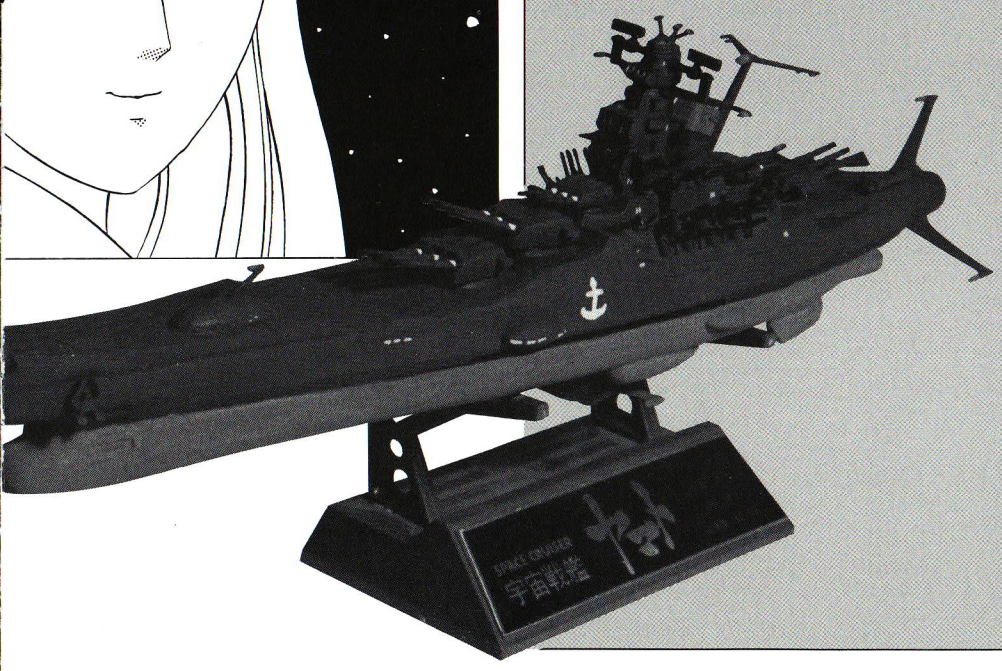
All Measurements given are approximate.





HOW I MADE THE YAMATO

A model kit review by Paul Davidson.

I remember with a certain fondness my thoughts when I received in the post the Bandai kit of the space cruiser Yamato; what a superb box illustration, almost like an original cell from a Yamato movie, with the Yamato shown as usual with its bright red lower hull and dark grey upperworks, drifting silently against a backdrop of stars and a huge asteroid ship in the distance. In fact I think I'll get it framed.

This was one anime model kit that I had set my sights on, yet I was certain had been deleted from the Bandai range. How wrong could I be ! Of course the model which I had bought from Comet Miniatures in London was only the smallest version of the Yamato that Bandai produce. The scale being 1/1000, it works out to be around nine inches long. The other versions I believe are 1/700 and 1/500 scale of which the latter must be a fair size.

The kit itself is very nicely moulded and comes with parts in three colours; red (bottom and bottom fittings), dark grey (battleship grey if you like!) for most of the rest, and a few parts in a very dark grey (gun barrels, masts and the stand).

It's a good idea to start with the stand as the Yamato has various fins and protrusions on the bottom and it cannot be laid down without risk of breaking these pieces off. The stand has a very nice adhesive backed nameplate which has the name in Japanese and English and a few minor notes of the size of the vessel, tonnage etc.

The majority of the parts go together very easily, the only difficult parts being the small and fiddly secondary gun barrels, but they are worth the extra bit of care which should be taken, and they add a bristling look to the centre portion of the ship, just like the real thing.

While on the subject of the real thing, just how does the space cruiser Yamato compare to the original Imperial Japanese navy ship Yamato ? Well, although the relative lengths of both vessels are similar, the proportions of the space cruiser are very different in that it is very much sleeker than the fat, squat IJNS Yamato. Of course space cruiser Yamato is a caricature of the original and the noticeable features of the original are exaggerated to charming effect, the bulbous bow, the undulating upper deck line and the flare of the bows, which has become curved, and exaggerated bulwarks.

Altogether a unique creation which, I think, only the Japanese could have dreamed up. It makes a very interesting and eyecatching model and it always provokes conversation from people who see it.

I bought my Yamato kit from Comet Miniatures, 46-48 Lavender Hill, Battersea, London SW11 5RH, Tel: 071 228 3702 and it cost me £8.99 plus postage.

While on the subject of anime kits from mail-order shops, I have found that stocks tend to sell out very quickly, so it's best to telephone first to check availability, and while you're on, ask about any new items or oddments which usually don't appear on lists.

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ARMOR GIRL PARODY COLLECTION

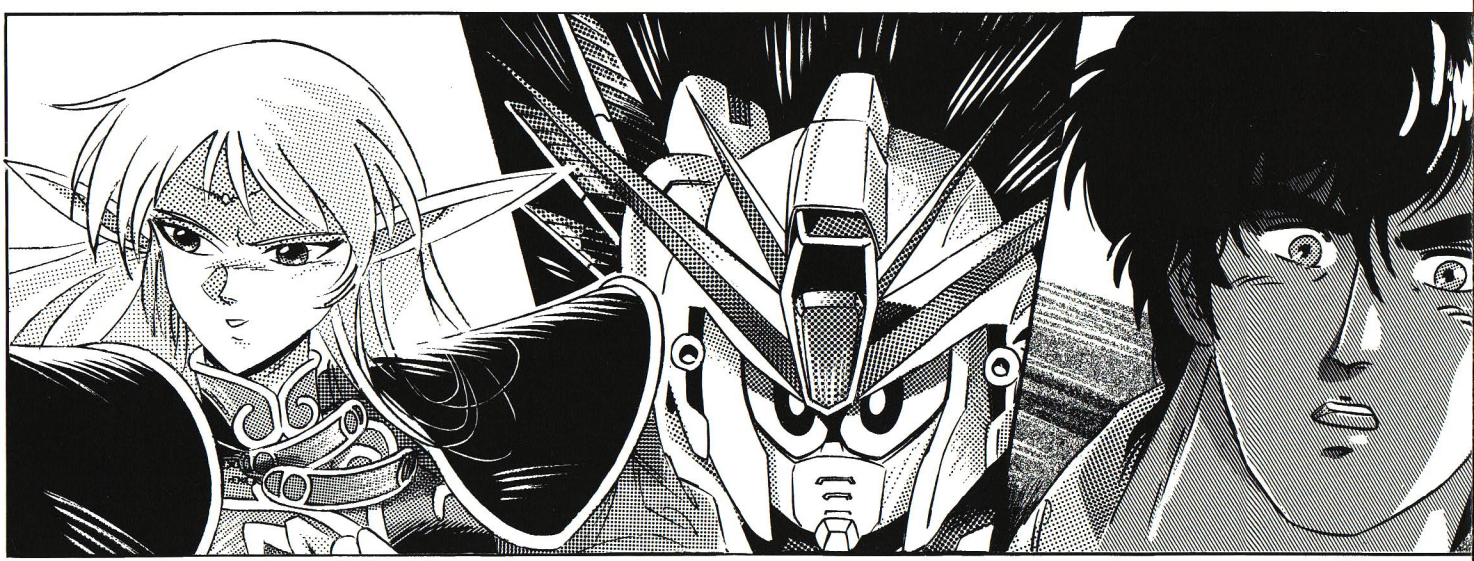
Armour based on S.E.J. TYPE-J9 GRIFFON: Mobile Police Patlabor TV series

ANIME AND HOW TO GET IT

By Helen McCarthy

Anime, the term used by aficionados of Japanese animation, already has a huge fan following in the States and is beginning to be more widely accepted here in the UK. Why this should be so is easy enough for an sf or fantasy fan to understand, though the general public (and the British tv and video establishment) seem to find the idea that anyone could possibly enjoy watching "cartoons in a foreign language" incomprehensible; it's a storytelling medium with none of the restrictions of live cinema, in which the story, writing and direction, rather than the special effects or star names, are at the centre of things, a place where imagination can mix the most bizarre, hilarious or obscene fantasy elements with real life, where things physical, temporal and spatial can be ordered as the artist desires. The best of anime is great art, the worst of anime is crap, and in between is a whole huge glorious romp of exploration, discovery and enjoyment.

But how to join that romp - ah, there's the rub! Without boring you with too much technical or political detail, I should explain that Japan, like America, uses the NTSC television and video system, while Europe, including the UK, uses PAL or SECAM. Why there isn't a universal world standard for such things is a matter for politicians to explain, but while there isn't such a standard, watching videotapes produced in Japan or America in this country means you have to do one of two things - have the tapes converted onto PAL, or buy/hire a dual-standard or multi-standard video system. (This is neither difficult nor expensive. Both Rumbelows and Visionhire will get such systems for you on request for a couple of pounds more per month than a decent PAL setup, and prices for purchase are similarly close to those of branded PAL vcrs.)



Never mind the system, then, what about the tapes? How can you actually buy anime in the UK? Well, for the most part, you can't. Since this country's video trade firmly believes that no-one over the age of seven watches "cartoons", the few anime features that have made it over from Japan go onto obscure kidvid labels which all seem to share the unfortunate characteristic of folding within a year and dumping their stock onto market stalls and car boot sales. Keep an eye on these for bargains and check out Steve Kyte's A to Z OF ANIME (starts next issue) for a list of titles under which these features have been found over here. The ANIME UK newsletter also lists some new "discoveries" by fans of the translated and dubbed anime features lurking on obscure British labels under odd names. Somewhere there's a rehash of designs from MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM into a truly appalling and *British-made* "feature film" called JOHNNY DESTINY SPACE NINJA. I kid you not. I wish I did.

This brings us neatly on to another problem. Because of the cultural divide between East and West is almost universally acknowledged as unbridgeable (ie They Aren't Like Us, Y'Know), Anime being dubbed for the US market, where most UK companies buy it, is generally not just translated, revoiced and left at that. Oh, dear me, no. Think of the offence we'd take at all those cultural differences. Think of the possible harm to British kids (because all anime is adapted for kids, whether intended for them or not) exposed to the Japanese attitude to sex and violence. (Ignore the fact that that the Japanese kids exposed to this are almost universally wellbehaved, hardworking, pleasant and courteous high achievers. It's people like that who screw up perfectly good sociological theories.) So to protect all America holds dear and Britain concurs with as a Good Thing, anime for Western consumption is generally rewritten, often reedited, and sometimes even reanimated, to remove such awkward nastiness as strong anti-war themes (replace with romance is the usual idea), heroes getting killed as a direct consequence of their own reckless actions (can't have characters the kids like getting killed, that would give them a really strange attitude to death and reduce the show's ratings to boot), or people going to the toilet, taking a shower, scratching their bums or otherwise behaving realistically. There's a version of LOCKE THE SUPERMAN going the rounds on a UK label at present in which the BBFC has done nothing about the sequence in which the hero is impaled on steel spikes but has done its bit to stop the rot of Western civilisation by air-brushing out the nipples in a shower scene. Apparently most kids don't know people have nipples, which must get the poor little tots really worried about those funny spots on their own chests.

So to sum up, the anime you will be able to buy on British labels will be filtered through American prejudices before it hits our own, hacked about and aimed for an audience for which it may never have been intended. (LEGEND OF FABULOUS BATTLE WINDARIA, a beautiful anti-war epic, has been rehashed on the MY-TV label in the UK for kids up to 6 under the title ONCE UPON A TIME.) In order to get The Real Thing, made for people over 6 and presented as the director, writer and animator intended, you have, at present, to look outside the UK - or join the fan network.

Italy, France and Germany show some anime on tv - series like URUSEI YATSURA (Lum) and CAPRICIOUS ORANGE ROAD are popular in Europe. America, with it's huge anime fandom, has shops which specialise in imports from Japan, two companies which subtitle anime for sellthrough and one for

theatrical release , and fans who will happily provide information, trade anime tapes and goodies, and correspond with fellow-fans. Once you take the plunge into this worldwide fandom, you'll find anime is much easier to get. See the listing of clubs in the US, Europe and the UK for more details of who to contact, and write to some or all of the shops listed for details of their mail order service.

For contacts with fellow-fans, straight trades usually work best. They get goods they want from Britain, you get goods you want from them, and no moneychanging charges or markups are incurred on either side. I can honestly say that in the three years I've been actively corresponding and trading with

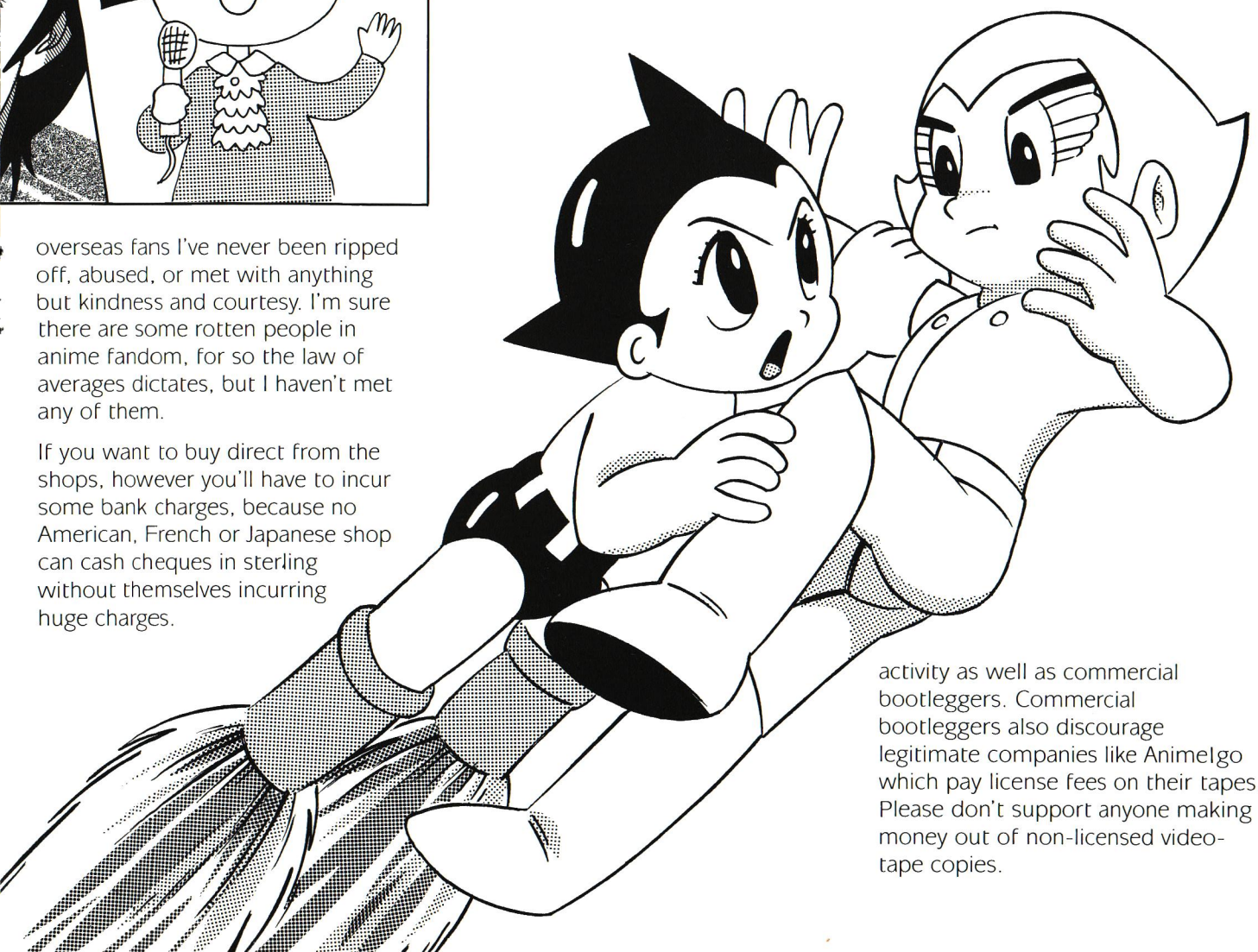
overseas fans I've never been ripped off, abused, or met with anything but kindness and courtesy. I'm sure there are some rotten people in anime fandom, for so the law of averages dictates, but I haven't met any of them.

If you want to buy direct from the shops, however you'll have to incur some bank charges, because no American, French or Japanese shop can cash cheques in sterling without themselves incurring huge charges.

You try to pay a dollar cheque into your own sterling account if you don't believe me! The first and most important thing is to find out what forms of payment the shop or dealer will accept - bank draft, International Money Order, cashiers cheque or whatever - and then check with your bank or the Post Office (home of the dollar Girocheque, which is a good option) to see what's cheapest. Since the charges on most money transfers don't vary much, it pays to send one big order at once, maybe getting together with some friends. This can also minimise postal charges since most places charge proportionally less to post big orders than small ones. Very often the difference between air and surface postage is a great deal less in terms of money than in terms of delivery time - a recent package posted air parcel from the UK to Japan cost me two pounds more than the surface rate but arrived in seven days instead of twenty-eight days plus. Don't forget that customs may charge you for goods coming into the country from a commercial source. Try and have the shop mark them as collector's items and not for resale; this sometimes helps. Don't worry about making mistakes in your choice of tapes, kits or books because you know so little about the genre - with the few UK outlets as amazingly overpriced as they are, you'll always be able to get rid of items you find you don't want to other fans.

One word of warning - when buying tapes from dealers or shops, please make sure they're legitimate commercial copies and not bootlegs. A large number of unlicensed traders in the States do bootleg copies at $20-$30 a throw. If you don't mind an illegal copy of a film you can probably find a fan who'll give you the same thing for the price of a video-tape and postage, rather than paying some leech to exploit you.

This is important for the simple reason that at present most anime studios and distributors encourage fan circulation of copies of their work where there isn't a market yet - they see it as creating a market - but where people start making big bucks from it (and video piracy, like most forms of organised theft, is BIG bucks) the police and licensing authorities crack down at all levels, stopping small-scale, non-profit fan activity as well as commercial bootleggers. Commercial bootleggers also discourage legitimate companies like Animelgo which pay license fees on their tapes. Please don't support anyone making money out of non-licensed video-tape copies.



There follows a list of clubs, shops and dealers, all of whom can help you on your way to greater knowledge and enjoyment of anime. It's as up-to-date as we can make it but doesn't claim to be comprehensive, so if you know something we don't, write in and tell us. Above all, enjoy your anime - that's what it's for!

ANIME SHOPS/COMPANIES

UK

BOOKS NIPPON, 64/66 St. Paul's Churchyard, London EC4M 8AA

Tel: 071 248 4956. Japanese magazines, books, stationery, gifts, etc.

CANNON & CO, 18 Newport Place, London WC2.
Tel: 071-437 7157

A range of anime videos in PAL, going for £18 a time. Although the language is Chinese, they do have a good range that's growing all the time. Titles available include: Cityhunter, Project A-Ko and Macross, Do You Remember Love.

COMET MINIATURES 46-48 Lavender Hill, London SW11 5RH
Tel: 071-228 3702

Kits, toys. Wholesaler to Forbidden Planet so the same stuff is cheaper at Comet.

FANTASY INN (downstairs at BOOK INN), 17 Charing Cross Road, WC2H

Tel: 071 839 2712. Comics, occasional other items.

FORBIDDEN PLANET, 71 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DG

Tel: 071 497 2150. Comics, Tshirts, kits, toys. High prices.

JAPAN CENTRE, 66-88 Brewer Street, London W1R

Tel: 071 439 8035,

Japanese magazines, stationery, food, travel, video hire.

LITTLE JAPAN, 6 Barclay Terrace, Bruntsfield, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Food, cafe, some manga.

OPTICAL LIVING ROOM, Howard Marks, Tel: 081 741 3658

Direct importer of Laserdiscs, huge catalogue.

SHEFFIELD SPACE CENTRE, 33 The Wicker, Sheffield S3 8HS, Dave and Lol Bromehead and their staff have done a lot to encourage anime in this country. Small, fluctuating but interesting anime stock. Write for lists (SAE).

OVERSEAS

ANIMAG, the Engish language zine of Japanese animation. A "must have". Distribution in the UK is patchy but you can get it by mail order, 6 issues $36. Write to ANIMAG, PO Box 23651, Oakland, CA 94632, USA.

ANIMEIGO, PO Box 989, Wilmington, North Carolina 28402, USA (919) 799 1501.

These wonderful human beings license and subtitle anime with real love and respect, and then sell the tapes by mail order. This firm deserves every encouragement we can give it so it'll subtitle more and more anime!

GENERAL PRODUCTS USA, 1455 "A" Market Street, No. 509, San Francisco, CA 94103, USA.

US branch of Japanese co. Kits, CDs, LDs, tapes.

HORIZON, 428 Boyd Street, Los Angeles, CA 90013, USA (213) 687 0853.

Toys, model kits, will do wholesale for dealers only.

JAPAN VIDEO INC, 1737 Post St., San Francisco, CA 94115, USA (415) 563 5220.

Tapes, LDs, mail order.

KIDMARK INC, Box 1999, Grand Central Station, NY 10163, USA.

Distributing STAR BLAZERS, the US version of SPACE CRUISER.

LASER PERCEPTIONS, 3300 Judah St., San Francisco, CA, USA.

Anime LDs and CDs. Very highly recommended mail order service.

NEWTYPE HOBBIES AND TOYS, 1531 10th Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94122.

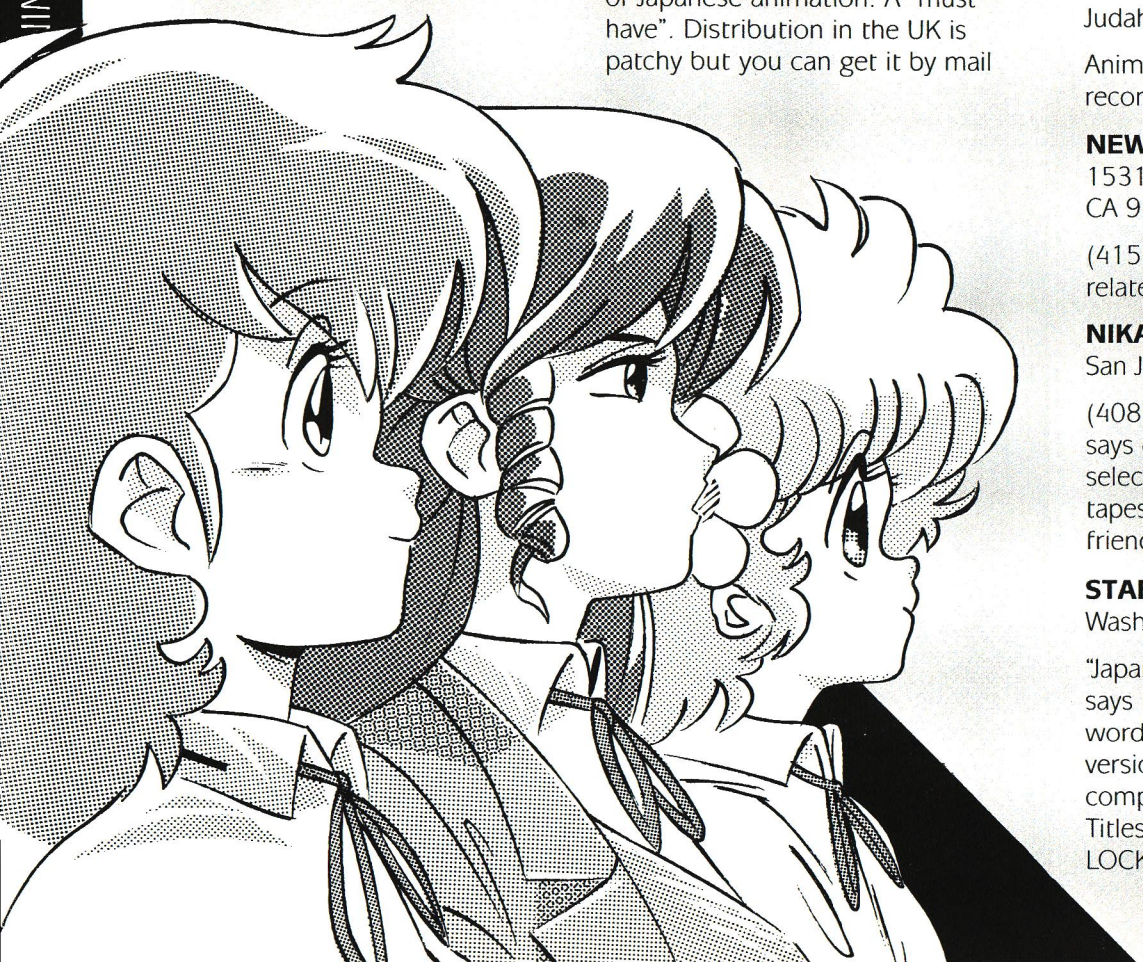
(415) 731 3077. Mail order, anime related stuff.

NIKAKU ANIMART, 615 N 6th St., San Jose, CA 95112, USA.

(408) 971 2822. Simply the best says everyone who's used it. Good selection of LDs, CDs, toys, games, tapes, great mail order service, friendly and knowledgeable.

STARVENTURES, PO Box 335, Washington Grove, MD 20880-0335.

"Japanese Movies Revised in English", says their advertising - in other words the US edited and dubbed versions, but still worth having for comparison purposes if nothing else. Titles include SPACE FIREBIRD, LOCKE THE SUPERMAN, BATTLE



FOR MOON STATION DALLOS. LARGE SAE PLUS 4 IRC's will get you their catalogue.

US RENDITIONS, 1123 Dominguez, STE,K, Carson, CA 90746.

Sister company to books Nippan/Nippon, US Renditions also subtitles anime for sell-through. STAR OF DESTRUCTION, DANGAIO, and GUNBUSTER are among their titles. Support them they're making anime LEGALLY available!

CLUBS AND FAN PUBLICATIONS

UK/EUROPE

ANIME UK, 147 Francis Road, London E10 6NT.

Stylish, opinionated, action-packed newsletter. Appears bi-monthly. 6 issues £7.50, subscription only. Edited by yours truly but I'm not the only one who thinks it's terrific, honest!.

ANIME KYO UK, 4 St. Peters Street, Syston, Leicester, LE7 8HJ.

Warm, friendly club run by Carlo Bernhardi. Showings, discounts on merchandise, great value for £5 subscription.

JAPANIME FAN CLUB, c/o Fabbrizo Ferriaro, Via Pietro Da Lissone 13, 20035, Lissone, Italy.

Possibly the slowest tape duplication service in the Western hemisphere. Huge library, elegant colour cover zine YAMATO.

US/CANADA

NB: this is only a small selection of the fan sources in the States. Your comments on any others you know are welcome!.

ANIME HASSHIN, PO Box 391036, Cambridge, MA 02139-1036, USA.

Lorraine Savage runs a great club, newsletters packed with information, synopses and translated pieces. Current UK membership US $20 and well worth it.

ANIME SACRAMENTO, 5422 Colusa Way, Sacramento, CA 95841, USA.

Small but useful newsletter packed with information and gossip from Laurine White.

BOSTON JAPANIME SOCIETY, c/o Paul Burgholzer, Treasurer, 48 Summit Street, Hailfax, MA 02338, USA.

Newsletter, tape trading privileges, discounts. Overseas membership US $14 per year.

EDC ANIMATION SOCIETY, PO Box 515942, Dallas, Texas 75251-5942, USA.

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JAPANESE ANIMATION FANS - WESTERN AUSTRALIA, c/o Tom Edge, 38 Dilkora Way, City Beach, Perth 6015, Western Australia.

Very friendly bunch, large anime catalogue on NTSC and PAL, great fun to write to.

MELBOURNE ANIME SOCIETY, Adrian Pitt, PO Box 247, Glen Waverly 3150, Australia.

Must be something about the air down under – another fun fan group, well worth contacting.

JAPAN

KOGEKI ENTERPRISES, Keith Johannsen, Higashinari-ku, Oimazato-Nishi, 2-16-17, Sunshine MKM, Imazato III, Apt #702, Osaka T537, JAPAN.

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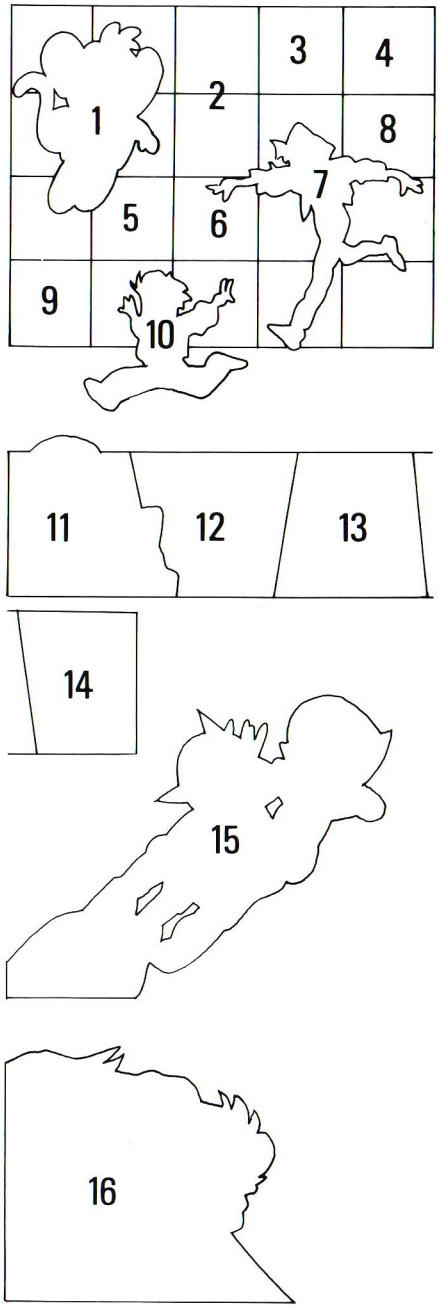
Please remember that you can't reasonably expect a reply (not a prompt one, anyway) from anyone unless you supply an SASE (in this country) or at least 4 IRC 's (for overseas) with your enquiry.

WHO'S THAT GIRL?

After reading through this article, some of you may be feeling slightly bemused as to the illustrations that accompany it. So just in case you're having just a bit of trouble identifing anyone, here's a who's who. or what's what guide to those elusive names.



1. CHAAMO – From Minky Momo (Return of Momo)
2. GOKU – From Dragonball Z
3. YURI – From Dirty Pair
4. DEVILMAN
5. LUPIN III
6. ICZER 2
7. MIKI JONOUCHI – From Cyberformula
8. RYO SANADA – From Yoroden Samurai Troopers
9. RANMA NIBONNOICHI (Female version) – From Ranma1/2
10. RYOHEI KAKU – From Cyberformula
11. DEEDLIT – From Record of Lodoss War
12. SD (Super Deformed) GUNDAM F-91
13. RYO SAIBA – From City Hunter
14. CHIBI MARIKO-CHAN
15. ASTRO BOY (Tetsuwan Atom) & Foe
16. A-Ko, B-Ko, and C-Ko – From Project A-Ko

THE ROLEPLAYING CONNECTION

By Jim Swallow

Part One:Anime Roleplaying Games

Most UK anime fans got their start by watching one series above all others - Harmony Gold's Robotech saga, crafted from three tv shows; Super Dimensional Fortress Macross, Super Dimensional Cavalry Southern Cross and Genesis Climber Mospeada.

Palladium Games of Michigan USA, who are the creators of such notable games as the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles system, and the new RIFTS rpg, market the eleven products that currently combine the Robotech roleplaying line.

The basic Robotech: The Role-playing Game is a soft cover book (as are all of Palladium's products) with rules loosely based on Palladium's "house" rules, which is fine if you've used them before, but not so hot if starting from scratch. The system is driven by characters having "classes" and "levels" of skill, gained by experience points, which are in turn gained by wasting Zentradi... The background is not as good as it should be, and it seems to be assumed that if you play the game, you've seen the series. The layout is shaky in places, but competent after a style.

Book 2, the RDF Manual, adds more optional rules to the basic game, such as hit location tables, global maps and new vehicles Useful but not indespensible.

The Zentradi sourcebook goes in depth on the villains of the Macross saga, their mecha, starships, but with not much on characters and motivation's.

The RDF Accelerated Training Programme is a sourcebook for the Robotech forces "Top Gun" academy ("Top Veritech"??) to be used as a string of scenarios to test and train player characters...useful for Gamesmasters short on ideas.

Moving on to the second part of the series, the Southern Cross book is actually slightly longer than the original rules, and it details the forces and enemies of that series. The background data is good, but again the bad guys are left undeveloped...mere cannonfodder for the players.

The Invid Invasion covers the final part of the Robotech series, and a lot of the rules are duplicated from the first two books. However, of them all, this is the best presented.

The other of the two scenario packs produced for the game is Lancer's Rockers, a follow-up to the last episode in the series.

The game has been re-issued as Robotech II: The Sentinels, based on the unfilmed series, with new mecha, and new rules.

The REF Field Guide is the only current supplement to the Sentinels game, composed of data files on hardware and mecha.

The most recent addition is The Return of the Masters, a wholly new sourcebook featuring elements of the Southern Cross and Invid games.

One of the better anime rpg's is R.Talsorian Games Mekton system, also in a softcover book form, with a well laid-out format and excellent interior art. Mekton does not conform to any predetermined background like Robotech or Battletech, although a sketchy game-world is included, and it captures the "feel" of traditional "mobile suit" anime very well.

The game is now in its second edition, and the more error-ridden first editions are quite hard to find. Mekton is the title of the basic rules, integrating man-to-man roleplaying with giant robot combat, and the far better second edition version is titled Mekton II (perhaps it should have been Zeta Mekton?).

The Advanced Combat Supplement has extra rules for the first edition of the game, which are integrated into the second edition version.

Roadstriker is a sourcebook for the transforming style of mecha, with rules for combining and mechamorphing. This has also had a second edition produced, called (surprise, surprise) Roadstriker II. The second edition is a great improvement on the first, and includes two scenarios and sketchy conversion rules for R.T.G's other major rpg, Cyberpunk (shades of Bubblegum Crisis).

The most recent addition to the Mekton stable has been Mekton Empire, which broadens the loosely defined game-world from the first few books into a big wide galaxy to adventure in, complete with new mecha (some of which look suspiciously like rejects from MSG..), rules for starships in the great anime tradition of Yamato and Captain Harlock, psionic skill (newtypes!) and a massive guide to the worlds and history of the galaxy, presented in a unique "customize-it-yourself" format. R.T.G. have stated that they plan to produce one large Mekton product every year.

Hero Games, a subsidiary of Iron Crown Enterprises, and the creators of the Middle-Earth Role-Playing System (MERP), Cyberspace and Spacemaster, have produced a small and hard-to-find system called Robot Warriors, but this is something of a halfhearted effort, linked only to Hero's Hero and Champions superhero rpg. A single supplement, Robot Gladiators, introduces the concept of sporting mecha combat, `a la Robotjox.

Lastly, and by no means least, is FASA's gargantuan Battletech game. The basic boxed game is a table-top wargame, and not an rpg, although an rpg supplement, Mechwarrior, is available. Several other boxed sets add new rules, game maps and mecha, as well as the many supplements and scenario books. I won't pretend to do justice to the massive field of Battletech items; instead, I'll direct you to a man more qualified - Ashley Watkins, editor of the mecha-games fanzine MEKTEK (contact Ashley at 62 May Road, Brighton, BN2 3EB, and tell him Jim sent ya!)

Next time I'll discuss converting non-anime rpgs to an anime style.

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Revenge of the BEM'S

By P. J. Evans

Its got multiple eyes, each one faceted with thousands of lenses. Its body is humped and rounded, clad in an external skeleton almost impregnable to its attackers. Many-tendrilled legs scrabble for a foothold, while its horribly complex mouth-parts quiver and chew, dripping with acidic saliva and indefatigable bloodlust. It's an alien.

Actually it's a dog mite, Otodectes Cynotis. Faithful Fido probably has a few of them tucked within his ears right now, but don't go looking if you want to eat later. Dog mites must be pretty scary, right? After all, Gunbuster featured them heavily as a world-threatening horror, albeit slightly enlarged in scale (at 1/3 of an inch long, Otodectes has a hard time destroying stars).

Looking through the anime lists, it seems that this terrifying and rather itchy creature is actually one of the better examples of animated exobiology. The alien has always been far more popular in Western sci-fi than in Japan, where the robots tend to get most of the good press. However, some of the the most famous and popular anime shows have storylines based around the struggles with or against extra-terrestials. So why do most animated A.L.F's give us an unerring sense of deja vu ?

Many of the characteristics given to anime aliens are limitations of the media. Though the appearance (should they have one) of such entities is not limited by budgetary constraints in the same way as live-action film and tv, the perceptions of the audience form the most powerful demarcations on what can be shown. The universe as seen through our tv tubes has been viciously hacked. The edges of the screen are knife blades extending into infinity, and what lies beyond the scope of purely audio-visual medium is left twitching bloodily on the slab: discarded meat to be fought over by packs of voracious novelists.

For example, the entity in question has to exist in the physical universe in much the same way as we do . Abstract energy patterns, colours out of space, and Lovecraftian horrors that lurk unseen beyond the threshold make difficult television. Take the (possibly) intelligent ocean

in the non-anime Solaris. What we have here is an interesting concept for an alien, and a terminally dull film.

Okay, so it exists, and we can see it, which implies that it is constructed from conventional matter, or at least energy so cohesive as to be visible. Once again, Lovecraft loses out. It is perfectly possible that the physical aspect of an alien life-form would be so alien as to drive the contactee out of his/her mind by the mere sight of it, and it works on paper. Try animating it, though. Even if it were possible, viewing figures would be understandably poor.

Physicality is one subject: Physiology is quite another, and quite a sore point in the search for the True Alien. Question one: how many E.T's have you seen that possess blood ? Put it another way: How many have you seen that don't ? Enough gore flies through the air in the course of most anti-alien combat situations to redecorate the walls a couple of times over, and there are a wide choice of colours. Three, to be exact. Roughly half the time Johnny Alien bleeds red just like us, regardless of his original skin colour. The rest of the time it's green, or, since Aliens, yellow and corrosive is quite in vogue.

Blood is the mechanism by which terrestrial creatures transmit oxygen and nutrients to the individual cells of their bodies. Plants use sap. This is a system that evolved on Earth, in response to the purely Terran environmental conditions. Can there be one mechanism for sustaining life in the universe ?

Not all anime alien designs fall into the same trap, but most come unstuck sooner or later. The protagonists of the original Gallforce trilogy are two alien races, the humanoid, but all-female, Solnoid, and the green and gooey Paranoid. Ignoring the silly names for a moment, and letting the Solnoid get away with being humanoid because they are supposed to be our ancestors, the Paranoid start off with some pretty good ideas to their credit. They appear to be basically liquid in form, and hold themselves together with mechanical skeletons. They can, at will (and upon death) revert to green slime, and flow into mecha of other equipment in order to control it. So far so good. But the unmelted form shows some destinctly human characteristics, namely bilateral symmetry, eyes, fingers, an upright posture, and exclamations like "My goodness !".

Recent astronomical observations seem to have turned up at least one extra-solar planet, albeit a supergiant orbiting a pulsar and scanned by a beam of lethally hard radiation four times a second. So it is probable that stars with planetary systems are, if not exactly widespread, certainly existent in some numbers. Our total knowledge of planets is really limited to our own system, and out of nine such bodies and several dozen satellites of varying size, only one is capable of supporting "Life as we know it". Guess which one.

All these bodies orbit the same sun, so it's pretty safe to assume that their constituent materials were also formed in that sun. Without going into the realms of astronomical data, it can be shown quite quickly that our sun is not typical. For one thing, it is a loner: some two-thirds of the stars catalogued by astronomers show close stellar neighbours. Binary, trinary and greater clusters are surprisingly common. Our sun is small, yellow, and in the most stable period of its life span. Most other stars are not.

Basically, we live on a million-to-one chance orbiting a million-to-one chance, and somehow one of those chances became us. Life anywhere is a miracle. The chances of finding comparable life, life that evolved into something we could even recognize as life: the chances against that are, appropriately, astronomical.

So why do anime aliens so often look like us ? Purely and simply, for the furtherance of the plot. Tetsuya Wakatsuki would not have fallen for Princess Kahm had she been equipped with any appendage more outre than a pair of cute horns. Likewise, had Iczer-1 looked like one of her Bedem foes, poor Nagisa would have had an even harder time in Iczer Robo. The safety harness wouldn't have fitted for one thing.

Macross takes scientific realism and slings it out with the garbage. The Zentradi are physiologically and genetically identical to human beings, save the fact that their average height is around sixty feet. This absolutely ensures the victory of the human race, since the increased length of Zentradi nerves would slow down their reactions to roughly one-tenth of the speed of ours, and of course, as soon as they fall down on an Earth-gravity world, their skeletons would shatter. Bone is strong, but not that strong. When elephants fall down, they don't usually get up again....

Of course, the clever Zentradi can miniaturise themselves at the drop of a hat to human size, so even human-alien reproduction is possible (and takes place), and thus does the story continue. No-one can say it isn't entertaining, even in its hacked up form as Robotech, but it does show up the real truth about aliens on stage and screen.

There aren't any.

We may think we are seeing aliens. The rubber and wires and the clever drawings are good at fooling us. But the plain fact of the matter is that these are not extra-terrestials we are seeing, but icons, metaphors, moving kanji constructed, Frankenstein-style, from the sundered anatomies of terrestial fauna. They are the stranger at the door, the bully at school, the man across the water with skin colour and language different from our own. They are the disease (The Thing), paranoia (Iczer-1), misguided foreigners to be shown the correct way to live (Macross). They are the enemy, and they are us.

We can't be blamed. Xenophobia is a primal reflex, an inbuilt safety cut-out that has ensured the survival of the species since it's conception. And when we watch those wicked aliens getting trounced again, we feel a little more secure, a little more smug in the knowledge of our own superiority. The reason screen aliens bleed is not biological, but psychological. We want them to.

If anyone writing an anime show sat down to really design an alien, one that couldn't have evolved on Earth, one with no terrestial cop-outs like insect eyes, squid tentacles, or human conceptions of politics, emotion or communication, the entire ninety-minute show would have to be devoted to explaining it. It could never be accurately described,

because there would be no common frame of reference. Realistic, maybe. But entertaining ? Watch an hour's documentary on protozoa someday, and then check your heart rate.

Switch on the tv, slam the Iczer-1 tape into the VCR with the heel of your hand, lie back and enjoy. Just remember, when the Bedem start bursting faces, it's not another world you're watching, just a funhouse mirror. Sometimes true reflections are a little too scary to watch without a bit of distortion.

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Eternal ANIME

Anime is an enormous genre, containing stories and styles to appeal to every age-group. ANIME UK MAGAZINE, like most publications on anime, concentrates on the better-known items which are more popular with British and American fans; but because there's so much out there and so much of it is marvellous, this column will focus on items you might not otherwise consider watching. Outside the main sf/fantasy stream, possibilities include sports anime, art films, school stories, modern romances, grand guignol horror tales, cookery shows - an endless list, offering something new and different to those willing to devote some time and attention.

To make it easy, we'll start with possibly the most famous "arthouse" anime of recent years: ROBOT CARNIVAL. Helen McCarthy gives her personal view.

ROBOT CARNIVAL

ROBOT CARNIVAL is one of the most beautiful films I've ever seen - indeed, until I saw MY NEIGHBOUR TOTORO it was my Number One. That's quite a tribute when you consider that my personal taste runs to fantasies, costume epics and romances, so that it's competing in the universe of the ravishingly-coloured Errol Flynn ROBIN HOOD, the slowmoving but gorgeous BARRY LYNDON and the entire Disney pantheon, not to mention everything featuring Rutger Hauer, an area of outstanding natural beauty if ever there was one.

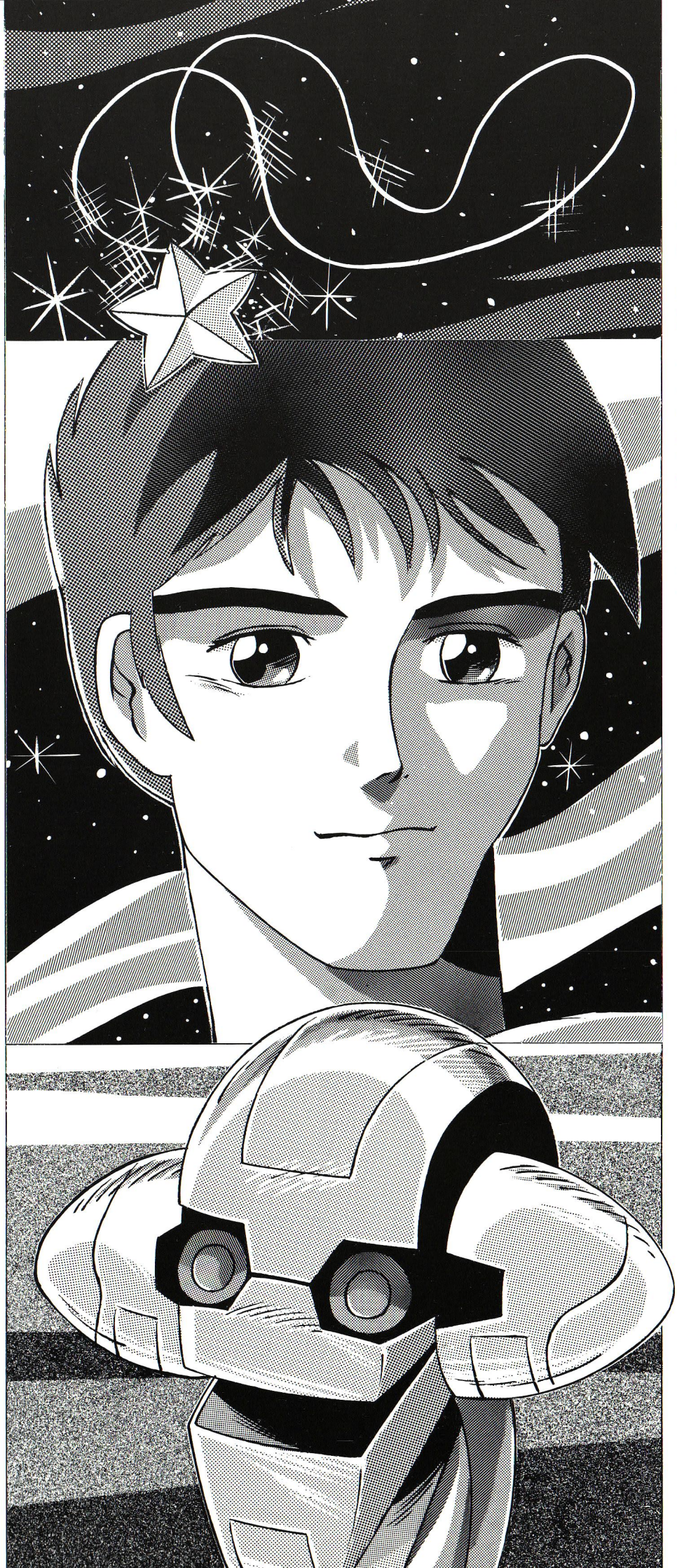
Anthology films, once popular among horror directors as the genre allows them to cobble three or four very slight stories into one movie on a low budget, and among film schools as try-out projects for groups of students who can't as yet carry a feature-length film alone, are not often made nowadays, perhaps because writers and directors seem to feel that all their ideas, however slight, merit a full ninety minutes plus of screen time. One of the merits of the anthology, though, is that it forces such creative prima donnas to be disciplined, punchy and brief, stripping away self-indulgent meanderings in the effort to get over the essentials of story and character in a short time. In the case of ROBOT CARNIVAL, each director has an average of less than fifteen minutes to make his or her point. The selling point for the directors of the eight segments must surely have been the fact that on such a short film they can have more hands-on involvement in every aspect than is ever possible on a massive feature-film project or under the pressures of television animation.

The film was released for cinema in 1987, copyright A.P.P.P. Co. Ltd., and produced by Nomura Kazufumi, better known for producing the wacky schoolgirl-crush spoof PROJECT A-KO. Eight of the foremost animation directors in Japan were invited to contribute their personal variation on the central theme of the robot. Interestingly, only two of the segments have any dialogue at all, though the music score is among the most interesting in anime.

Otomo Katsuhiro, whose AKIRA was to take the cinemas by storm a year later, was, at this time, still best known for his manga work and character design on such features as HARMAGEDDON. With artist Fukushima Atsuko, he devised the title/credit sequence. In contrast to the world he was creating for AKIRA, the film opens on the edges of a tiny, remote desert village, somewhere in South America if the costumes and animals are any guide. The Carnival's arrival is heralded by handbills blown on the wind and induces panic among the residents; as the mighty juggernaut rolls into town, crushing everything in its path, we can see why. Otomo is commenting on the dangers of being seduced by technology, a major theme of AKIRA, to which he returns in the end credit sequence.

FRANKEN'S SPROCKET WHEEL is the title of the first story, directed by the artist, Morimoto Kouji. It's a variation on the Frankenstein theme; on a dark and stormy night a mad scientist attempts to arouse his robot with an apparatus straight from every Hammer Frankenstein film you ever saw, only to find that despite his technological supremacy it's the little things that, quite literally, trip him up! Morimoto was key animator on HARMAGEDDON and DAGGER OF KAMUI, but works in a different, more comical style for this wryly humorous piece.

Ohmori Hidetoshi's **DEPRIVE** is a girl-and-robot saga in the traditional vein. A young girl gives her medallion to her faithful robot guardian before she is carried off by attackers. The gorgeous young man who comes to her rescue is, of course, the robot in



human form. Some enjoyable fight scenes, references to all sorts of anime traditions like the use of Christian symbology, bondage elements, and a magnificently OTT punk-style villain make for a classic anime romp, with good triumphing over evil in a most satisfactory manner, and the robot reinstated as the girl's best friend and guardian but getting to keep his hunky human physique and red hair.

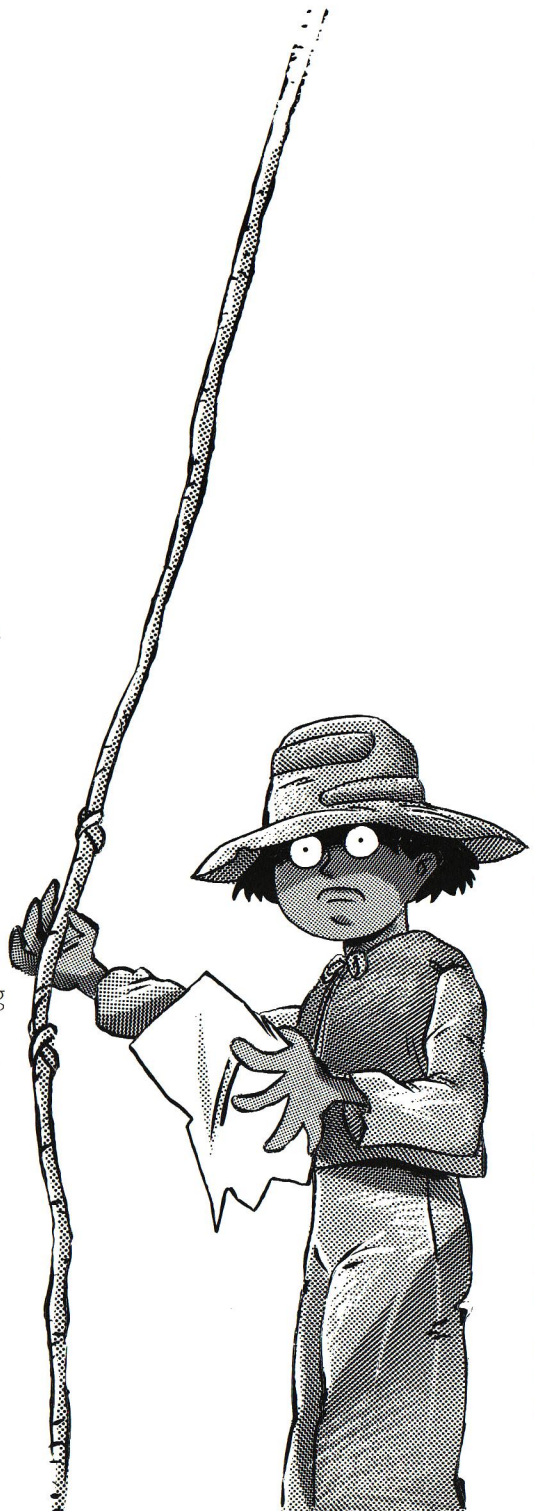
PRESENCE is another thing altogether. This is one of the two stories with dialogue and was drawn and directed by Umetsu Yasuomi, who has impressive potential as a director of tear-jerkers. Nothing in his previous pedigree - key animator on OUTLANDERS, DAGGER OF KAMUI and the LENSMAN tv series, character designer and chief animator on MEGAZONE 23 PART 2 - prepared me for the impact of this film. Visually it's a stunner. The animation is completely and perfectly beautiful; every frame is arranged to perfection, every detail exact. The music will haunt you. The story, of a robot designer out of work because robots are no longer required by a society trying to cling to the styles of its past, is another version of the Frankenstein theme. The reason for this technophobia is revealed in one brief but superb shot that sweeps over the chocolate-box city to a crumbling, decaying huddle of tower blocks in the distance. Whatever catastrophe destroyed what we would call modern urban life, its effect has been a retreat to the past - robots are mocked and shunned, and another powerful shot of a skip full of decaying robot bodies sums up the city's rejection of high technology.

This time, the maker creates life, only to find himself destroying it when it refuses to stay within the limits he sets by attempting to grow, think, and even love. Terrified of what he has made, he murders his creation and faces a lifetime of memory and regret; but, in the end, love is stronger than fear and destruction. The ending is either total schmaltz or brave, inspiring and the only possible note to go out on. You'll love it or hate it, depending on how you feel about three-hankie movies. I love it.

STARLIGHT ANGEL is a typical anime story - or is it? Two girls out for the evening at the Robot Wonderland theme park (not entirely unlike the Space Park in real-life Tokyo) discover to their horror that the same boy is two-timing them both; the gentle little heroine runs off in tears, to be followed by a sympathetic "robot" attendant who starts out attempting to return her lost locket, transforms into a true anime hero to save her from a giant robot on a ride that takes off into the realms of fantasy, and finally turns out to be the boy of her dreams. Where do fantasy and reality begin and end? Does romance happen in the real world, or in some magical land where anything can occur? You'll certainly recognise most of the characters if you've watched ZZ GUNDAM as character designer Kitazume Hiroyuki, who also worked on LGAIM and AURA BATTLER DUNBINE as key animator, is director/artist on this segment.

CLOUD is anime for the New Age, again with haunting music. Surreal and symbolic, it gives director/artist Lamdo Mao, working on his first feature, a chance to show off some beautiful effects in a gentle fantasy of a young robot's walk through the day, into a long dark night and out into morning again. A parable of Man's efforts at destruction of the natural world may well be involved here, but no interepretation is imposed by the director. Listen, look and think what you like.

STRANGE TALE FROM THE MEIJI PERIOD CULTURE: THE ATTACK OF THE RED HAIRED BARBARIAN is a mockery of the World War II propaganda films churned out both in animated and live-action formats. Director/artist Kitakubo Hiroyuki and character designer Sadamoto have fun creating the atmosphere of nineteenth-century Japan as a backdrop for this wacky tale of a gaijin scientist (who speaks English throughout with Japanese subtitles) attempting to conquer Japan in his magnificent fighting machine, a giant robot built of bricks. Opposing him are the youthful heroes of the Home Defence Force in their state-of-the-art wooden mobile suit, armed with unquenchable courage, determination, and all the other qualities necessary for young heroes, as well as a healthy proportion of stupidity, selective deafness and bone idleness. They speak Japanese, but the meaning is pretty clear throughout - if Japan doesn't succumb to the invading foreign devil, it is very unlikely to survive the efforts of its brave defenders! Sadamoto obviously enjoyed this lighthearted romp after the solemnity of WINGS OF HONNEAMISE, on which he was chara designer and chief animator; it was less of a change for Kitakubo, whose earlier work included stints as key animator on DREAM HUNTER REM, URUSEI YATSURA 3, and soft porn comedy CREAM LEMON POP CHASER.



Nakamura Takahashi's **CHICKEN MAN AND THE CRIMSON HEAD** is surreal in a totally different vein from CLOUD. The director/artist has created a nightmare world of machines which, after dark, come to life and prowl the city, transmuting it into a hellish jungle. Into this terrifyingly familiar yet utterly changed world stumbles a hapless salaryman on his way home. The leader of the battalions of the night, a robot with a chicken's face, pursues him relentlessly, but dawn comes up just in time - slowly showing a city which has been changed forever.

Otomo returns for the final sequence, in which one of the poor South American peasants from the title segment picks up a shining ball left behind by the Carnival and takes it back to his hovel. As his wife and children watch, first in suspicious puzzlement and then with laughter and cries of pleasure, the ball opens up, transforms itself into a tiny dancer and spins across the tabletop. As it drifts to the floor it blows the house up and introduces the final credit sequence, with production credits written across soft-colour and sepia drawings illustrating various aspects of the anthology. Our last sight of the mighty robot juggernaught shows it falling apart in the desert, the forces of nature finally having overcome the works of man.

The variety of styles and stories is one of the film's greatest strengths, and make it well worth seeing even if you view it simply as a sampler of the work of some of anime's most innovative talents. I think it's more than that, though. The first time I saw it, it made me laugh, cry, wonder and think. I went away from it with a series of new ideas about how we see robots - in the arts, in science, in our own lives - ideas about how we human beings are starting to react to this new species, the only species among all the other ones that share the planet with us which we ourselves have created. Even though I've now seen it well over a dozen times, it still makes me laugh, cry, wonder and think.

All this, and beauty too. If you get the chance to see ROBOT CARNIVAL, don't miss it.

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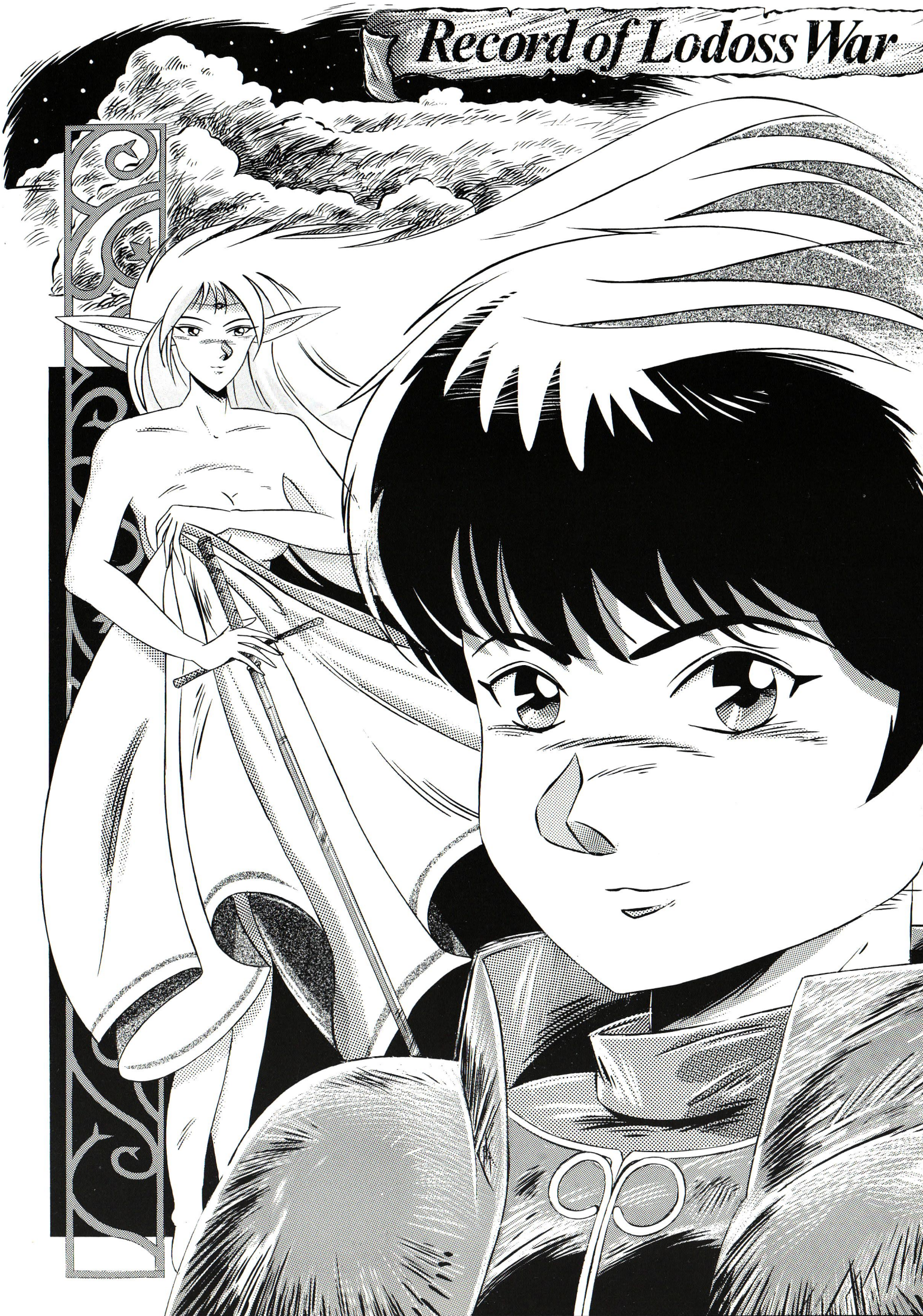
Record of Lodoss War

There's one particular kind of anime and tv merchandise which rarely makes its way into this country and is not widely collected; yet it includes some of the most charming little items ever produced, it's small-scale enough for a collection to fit into even the most limited space, and, best of all, it's incredibly cheap. What am I talking about? I'm talking about the toys, kits and games routinely given away with sweets and snacks on sale to Japanese children.

Every sweet manufacturer has some of these in its range. They usually come in one of two formats: two small boxes cellophaned together, one containing the edible stuff and one the gift; or, at the more expensive end of the sweet shop spectrum, a single larger box with a packet of sweets or gum and a separate packet containing the gift. These larger, more expensive boxes measure about 4" X 6" in size and can cost as much as 300 yen (about £1.20). The smaller ones start from about 100 yen (under 50p).

For your money you get a packet of chocolate drops, chocolate-coated biscuit drops, or gum, and a small toy based on a tv show character or video game. The toy might be a kit - there are some exquisite 1/180 PATLABOR kits, less than 3" high when complete but with good detail - game cards to collect, decorative pencil-top models, key rings, in fact just about anything that fits into a small box. Sweets aimed specifically at girls often have ponytail bands with character motifs, decorative hairslides, combs or small items of jewellery. Obviously, the more expensive the box, the larger and more detailed the toy.

In our main picture you can see tucked away to the right of centre a tiny castle with a squat metal-armoured figure in front of it. It's

SWEET

one of the SD GUNDAM 'LACROAN HEROES' range by Bandai. The set, in a single full colour 5" X 2" box, consists of the plastic castle and gold metalised figure, plus a card base printed with pathways and grass, transfers to detail the castle doors and windows, and a plastic sprue with sword, shield, jousting lance and other tiny weapons for the figure to hold - all this, and some very pleasant banana-flavoured gum, for just 100 yen, and there are 5 different castle sets with figures and 3 warhorse sets to collect.

The larger scale items are represented by the Deformed KAMEN RIDER figures to the left of centre in the picture. These are based on a very popular live-action tv series. Each comes in kit form, with gum, and each figure in the set has a different use - one is a sticker-dispenser, one holds 100 yen coins, one contains another figure which is the "handle" for two retractable screwdrivers, and so on.

The boxes themselves can be very attractive. Where there are two separate boxes per item, each will often carry half the design - say, the upper or lower half of a mobile suit - on front and back. The other items to collect in the same set are usually shown somewhere on the sides or back. While some manufacturers expect you to take pot luck on which kit or toy the box contains, others punch a small hole in the box so you can check whether or not it's one you already have.

Unfortunately, as I mentioned earlier, these little charmers are not often found in the UK. In London, both Mitsukiku and the Japan Centre have occasionally had one or two in their food sections, and Japanese grocers sometimes carry them. They're well worth looking out for, but because they are so ephemeral your best bet to get a regular supply would be a Japanese penpal who doesn't mind scouring the sweetshops on your behalf!

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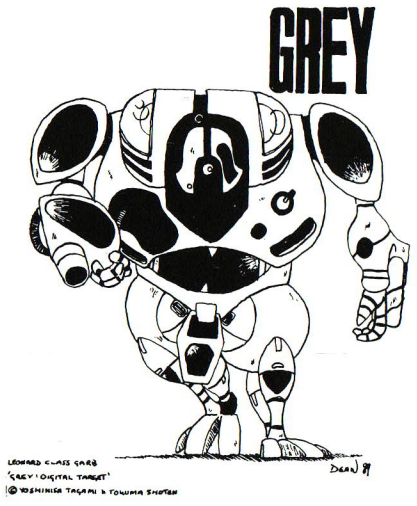
SHOP

anime EYECATCH

This is the spot where we give any budding Ken-Ichi Sonoda's the chance to show off their skills, so if you fancy the challenge just send your artwork to either address at the beginning of the magazine. All we ask is that (for the moment) all drawings are in black and white, are anime based (either original designs or existing characters) and are not a copy of an existing illustration (a less polished original will always be given more consideration than a finshed copy).



Briarios Beach by Steve the Duck

Grey by Dean Heathcote

Fire of Ryo by Vaunda Perry

Ah Oshi!
Cooking with Sue (Deedlit) Shadbolt
TOTORO CAKES
*Ah, delicious!
INGREDIENTS
2 eggs (Free range!)
4oz Marge
6oz Caster Sugar
6oz Self-Raising Flour
1tbs Water
Icing (Royal Icing)
Decorations (eyes)
Cake Cases
A Pre-heat oven.
200°C
B Mix marge, sugar, egg yolks and water.
C Add sieved flour (slowly!) then stir.
D Whisk egg whites until firm (but fluffy!)
E With metal spoon, fold in egg whites.
Fold
F Spoon mixture evenly into cake cases.
G Cook for 15 mins or until golden brown!
H Mould Totoro shapes from icing.
I Stick Totoro's to cakes (when cool) with apricot jam, then decorate.
JAM
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SUBSCRIPTIONS

Subscriptions are a Good Thing for all concerned. The reader (you) is guaranteed a copy of the magazine - no more finding your local shop has sold out. The publisher has the money for a number of issues up front, and is thus guaranteed working capital to produce them. We want to offer subscriptions to **ANIME UK MAGAZINE** - but do you want to buy one? Of course you do! If you're interested in taking out a 4-issue, one-year subscription to **ANIME UK MAGAZINE**, write to the editorial address with a stamped, self-addressed envelope. If we get enough enquiries to make a subscription scheme viable we'll send you full details, if not we'll let you know.

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ANIME UK MAGAZINE accepts both black & white and colour advertising from anyone with anime-related products or services to offer. Write to Wil Overton at:
70 Mortimer Street,
London, W1N 7DF
or ring him on: 071-637 2587

We also offer a design and artwork service to ensure that your ad looks as good as the rest of the magazine. Again talk to Wil.

WHATEVER NEXT?

in the next issue of ANIME UK MAGAZINE you'll find:

All the dirt on the

DIRTY PAIR

BUBBLE GUM CRISIS

Kenichi Sonoda's cuties suit up to hit the streets in 21st century Tokyo.

A TO Z OF ANIME

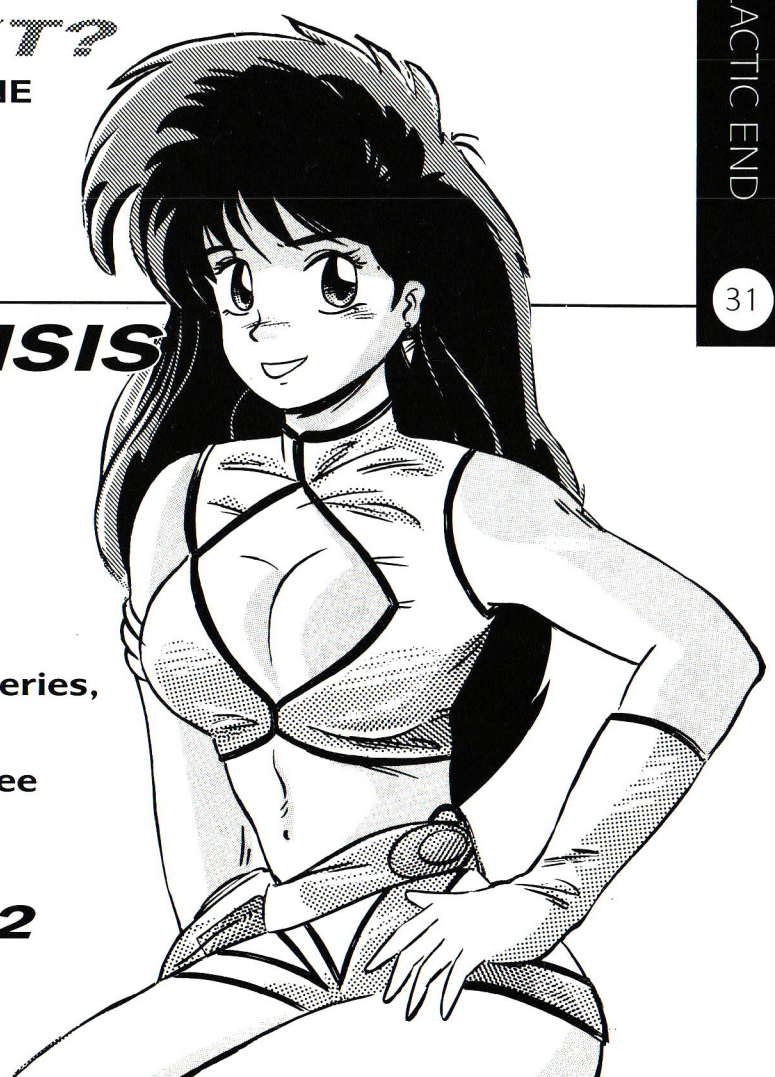
Steve Kyte's marvellous miscellany of anime information.

PATLABOR

Synopses from some of the OAVs & TV series, plus PATLABOR, THE MOVIE.

All this and more, and you only have three months to get ready for it!

LOOK OUT FOR
ANIME UK MAGAZINE 2
SPRING 1992



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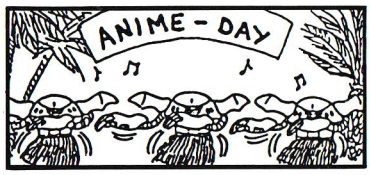

"CON IN THE POCKET"

At: THE RUTLAND HOTEL, SHEFFIELD

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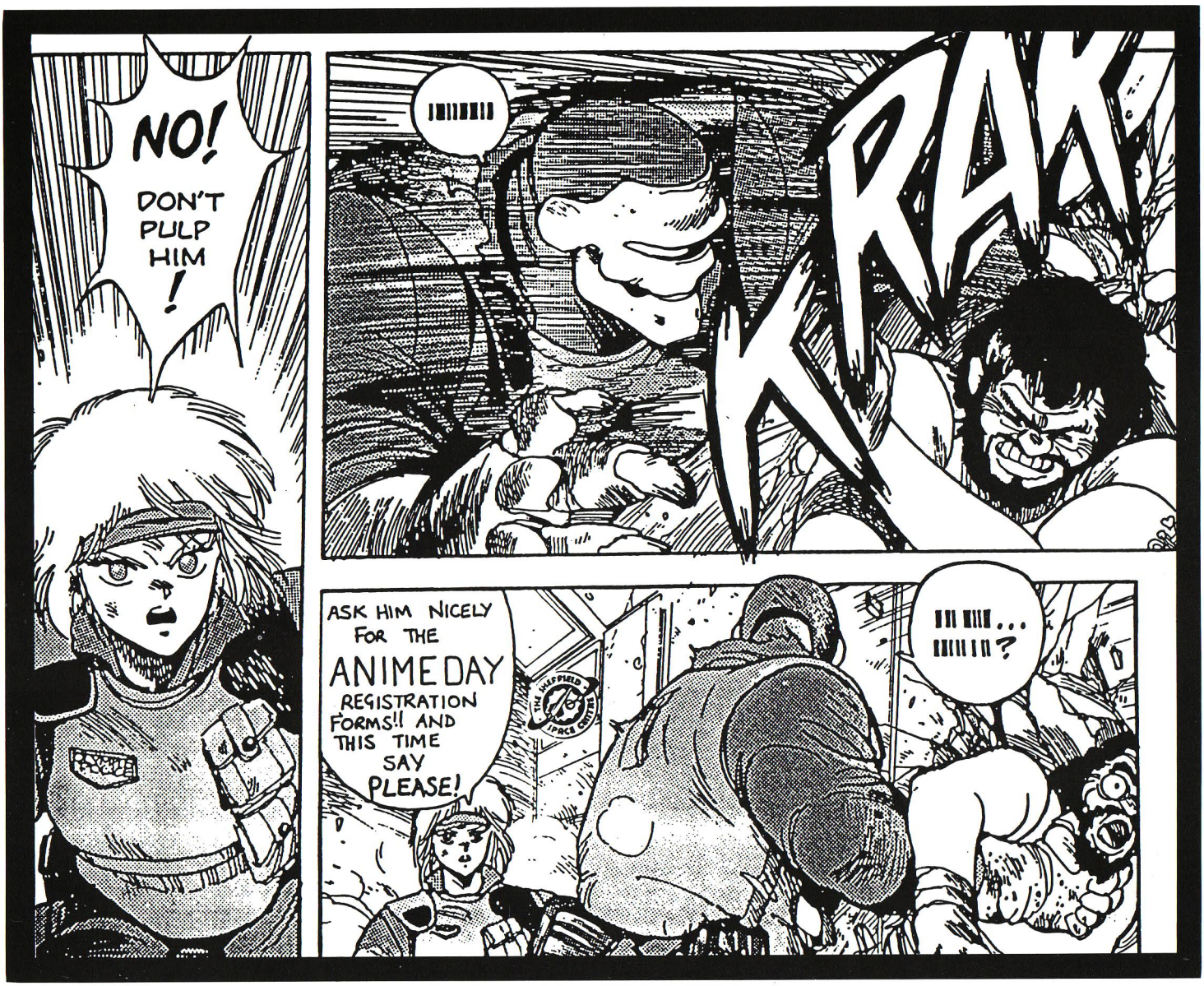

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2~4th October 1992

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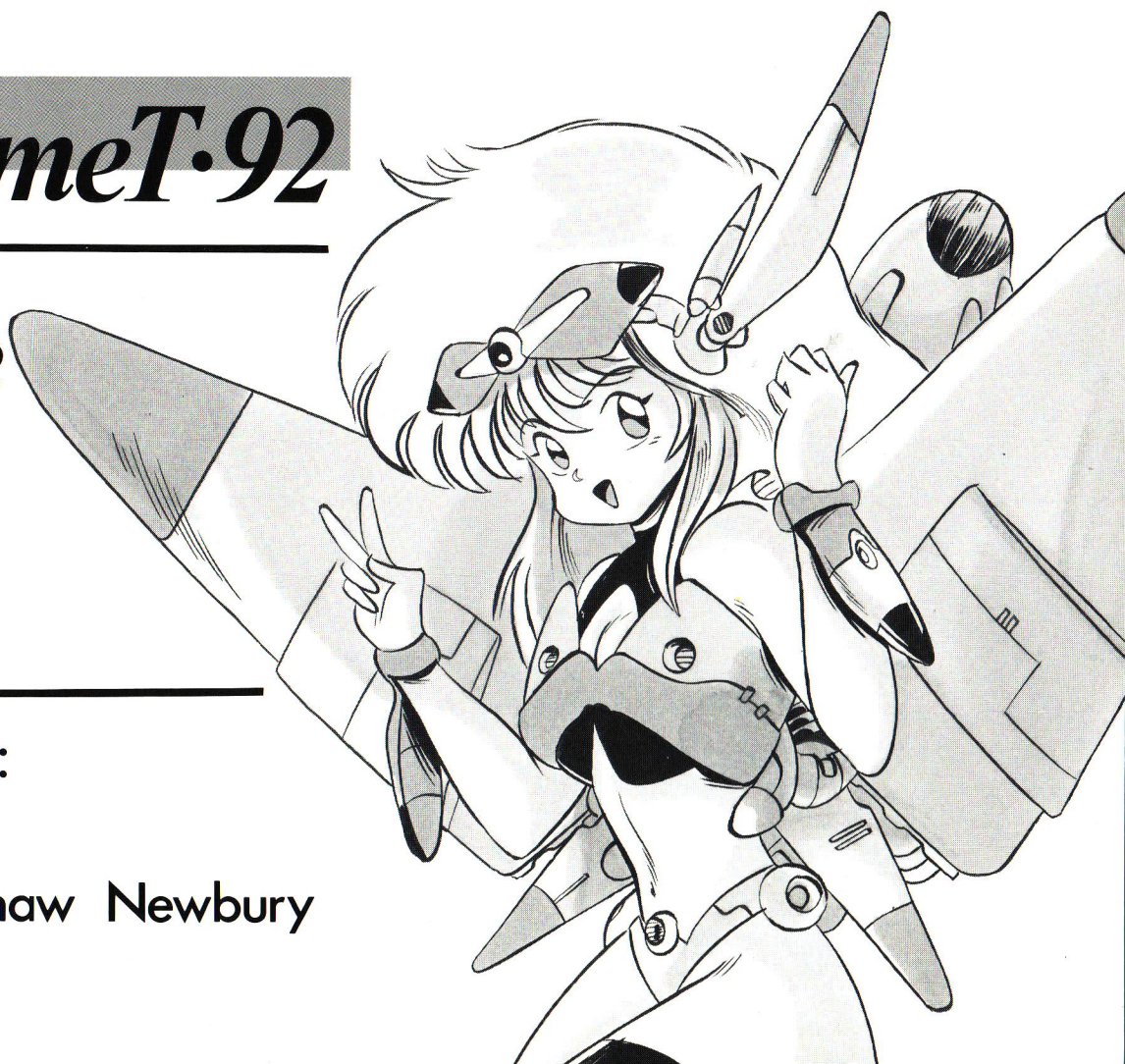

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